

**TODAY**

**BRIAN GLANVILLE MEETS GIANFRANCO ZOLA**  
MAGAZINE

**A MODEL FRIEND**

Matt Le Blanc in a 32-page men's style special  
MAGAZINE

**THE MINI PHILOSOPHERS WEEKEND**

**20-POINT DIY TAX PLAN**  
WEEKEND MONEY

**MONDAY**

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Tories free to attack single currency

## Cabinet lets Euro-sceptics off the leash

By Andrew Pierce, Polly Newton and Philip Webster

TORY candidates wishing to defy the Government line on the single currency were given Cabinet blessing yesterday as it emerged that parliamentary aides to the Foreign Secretary and party chairman had joined the list of those saying Britain must keep the pound.

Only hours after John Major reiterated that ministers who breached the "wait and see" policy would be dismissed, William Hague, the Welsh Secretary and leading Euro-sceptic, said candidates were free to say what they liked about the euro.

His remarks were supported by Conservative Central Office which said that candidates, provided they were not ministers, had long known that they could express their personal preferences in their election addresses.

Labour and Liberal Democrats exploited the apparent contradiction, claiming that Mr Major's attempt to control the rebellion had fallen apart.

Mr Hague spoke as part of a concerted effort to downplay statements in an election newsletter by Angela Browning, the Agriculture Minister, who severely strained the Government's carefully crafted policy on the single currency.

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cy. "Conservative candidates do not all have to write exactly the same election addresses," he said on Radio 4's *The World at One*, though he failed to stipulate that candidates who were ministers were exceptions to the rule. "Candidates are free to set out their views," he added.

The Prime Minister claimed Mrs Browning's concern had focused principally on tax and spend policy. "She makes it clear that she would not agree to transfer of nation sovereignty over tax and spend policy. Well, let me make it absolutely clear neither would I, neither would the Government. So the position there is quite clear."

Some 150 candidates have already received financial assistance from Paul Sykes, the millionaire businessman, in return for opposing a single currency in their election manifestos.

There was speculation that

another minister might join the revolt.

David MacLean, the Euro-sceptic Minister of State at the Home Office, declined to answer calls on the subject yesterday. A spokeswoman in his constituency office in Penrith and the Borders said: "The election address will be printed next week."

Alan Duncan, parliamentary private secretary to Brian Mawhinney, the Tory Chairman, is another high profile rebel. He wrote: "Britain must retain the right to make its own law. The EU should be a free trade area of sovereign nation states choosing to co-operate in some areas. We must keep our veto at all costs. I am opposed to a single European currency."

Henry Bellingham, the parliamentary aide to Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, has supported the wait and see policy but made clear he would vote against a single currency in the next Parliament.

Charles Hendry, a vice-chairman of the Tory Party who is fighting the marginal seat of High Peaks, wrote: "Nothing so far has persuaded me that it would be in our interests to join the single currency."

Norman Lamont, the former Chancellor, has left voters in Harrogate in little doubt. He has published posters which state: "No Surrender. Keep the pound. No to the euro."

David Heathcoat-Amory, who resigned as Paymaster General to oppose a single currency, has posted his opposition to the euro on the Internet.

Nigel Evans, who is parliamentary private secretary to Mr Hague, has also signalled opposition to the single currency in his election address in Ribblesdale.

John Prescott, the Deputy Labour leader, said: "John Major... is being misled by up to 200 Tory candidates. The British Tory Party makes the Borgias look like a happy family."



John Major yesterday: his smiles broadened after Thursday's Times MORI poll

## How Major got his smile back

HIT the "mute" button on your video recorder. Watch John Major's press conference on Tuesday. Then, still without sound, watch Thursday's conference. The change in the body language is unmistakable.

Something in the eyes, the mouth, the facial muscles and movements of the head tells you wordlessly that this is a man who has moved from exhaustion and despair at the start of the week, to hope at its finish. Even his jokes are starting to work.

Like any complicated individual, John Major has become the subject of myth. Principal among the myths is the "if... then" myth - "If you can keep your head when all about

Matthew Parris watches a man who has moved from exhaustion at the start of the week to hope at its finish

you're losing theirs..." etc. Major the stoic: the notion that this archetypal Englishman is unflappable and phlegmatic in all circumstances.

The image is reinforced by another: the "even keel" myth. The Prime Minister, it is said, is an unemotional man: cool, detached, slow to chide and swift to bless.

Finally, and linked to these, is the "nice bloke" myth: the idea that Mr Major is relaxed and amiable, ready, even in the crack of doom, for a pint

and a chat about cricket with anyone he meets.

Those who work with him will tell you a different story. Fiercely loyal to him, every one of them - nobody who knows him has any doubt of his fundamental decency and kindness - they nevertheless speak of the Prime Minister with a terrible temper, subject to black moods of great intensity, who suffers days at a stretch gripped with something not far from a conviction that the whole world is out to get him.

"Imagine," he once said to a friend who suggested that being Prime Minister must be a terrific buzz, "that you were an actor who, after a first

Continued on page 2, col 3

## Police praise courage in court of gang rape victim

By Lin Jenkins and Richard Ford

AN AUSTRIAN gang rape victim flew home to Vienna last night after British police and lawyers praised her remarkable composure while giving evidence of the attack in which she was also subjected to other sexual acts and racial abuse.

But the woman, who heard a jury convict the eighth member of a group of teenagers of the violent sexual assault, broke down in tears at the completion of her evidence.

The woman, aged 32, a mother of a son aged five and daughter of three, had returned to London seven months after a weekend shopping trip ended with the attack by the eight boys near her hotel in King's Cross.

She came back to give evidence at the Old Bailey trial of the 15-year-old youth who denied rape, indecent assault and robbing the woman. The seven other youths, part of a gang left to run wild on the capital's streets, had admitted the rape.

Last night after the youth had been found guilty, Detective Sergeant Keith Manktelow, the officer in charge of the case, said: "I would commend the victim for her bravery in going through all this." The woman won praise for the manner in which she re-lived the horrific gang rape on the towpath of Regents Canal.

The woman had remained calm as she recalled the 45-minute ordeal. She had shown similar coolness during the attack. "During these rapes she did seem to be that she, in her own words, separated her mind from her body as much

as she could, a remarkable achievement in the circumstances," John Bevan, QC, said at the Old Bailey. Her calm and quiet dignity in the witness box masked months of emotional turmoil.

Her marriage broke up and she moved with her two children to live with her mother. One week after her return from London, she suddenly left her job in a travel agency where friends had been anxious to offer her support. She now works at the city's airport in a solitary job. Although she has left her husband, the couple remain in close contact.

Her strong willpower was revealed both during the attack and in the witness box. She shed no tears as she gave her evidence and the only moment her composure looked like slipping was when she was asked to study photographs of her teenage attackers.

Even after she was informed that she did not have to look at the pictures if it would upset her, the woman said she would do so if it helped the court.

One source close to the case believes that those tears at the end of the case could signal the start of the healing process. She had bottled up her emotions since the attack, refusing the now fashionable counselling to help her overcome the attack.

Two brothers, one the youth convicted yesterday, were Filipino, four of the gang African Caribbean, one Colombian and one white with a Greek-Cypriot father. Seven will be sentenced next Friday and the ringleader, a 6'2" tall 14-year-old, next month.

## Both sides keep hope of TV debate alive

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

HOPES of a television debate between John Major and Tony Blair remained alive last night after talks between *The Times*, the broadcasters and representatives of the two main parties.

Peter Stothard, Editor of *The Times*, has challenged both leaders to take part in a debate organised by the newspaper and covered by the television companies tomorrow week in central London.

Michael Dobbs, the Conservative negotiator, said after speaking to Mr Stothard and the broadcasters: "They are as

keen as we are to hold this historic debate." It would be difficult in the short time left to agree details but "I am sure that with goodwill it can be done."

ITV and the BBC have indicated their willingness to film the debate. Under proposals put forward by *The Times* it would be between Mr Major and Mr Blair, but arrangements would be made for Paddy Ashdown to be given a fair hearing.

Mr Blair's office indicated last night that it was ready for talks.

## London blackout plot alleged

Large parts of London and the South East would have been blacked out for months if an IRA gang had destroyed key power installations, an Old Bailey jury was told... Page 3

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## Scientist goes to law over pattern on the humble roll

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

ONE of Britain's foremost scientists is suing the makers of a leading brand of lavatory paper.

Sir Roger Penrose, Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Oxford University, says that although Kleenex Quilted may be super-absorbent and gentle on the skin, it has no right to achieve this by using the mathematical pattern he designed 20 years ago. In his legal action he seeks destruction of all stocks of the paper bearing the pattern.

With Pentaplex Ltd, a company that markets puzzles and other material based on his design, Sir Roger has issued a High Court writ against Kimberly-Clark, manufacturers of Kleenex, claiming infringement of copyright.

Yesterday David Bradley of

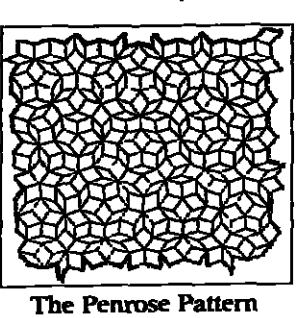
Pentaplex said: "So often we read of very large companies riding roughshod over small businesses or individuals, but when it comes to the population of Great Britain being invited by a multinational [company] to wipe their bottoms on what appears to be the work of a knight of the realm without his permission, then a last stand must be made."

Sir Roger, 65, is one of Britain's most distinguished mathematical physicists, an expert on black holes and consciousness. His "Penrose Pattern" consists of diamond shapes, one narrow, one broader, that fit together to fill a two-dimensional plane with no gaps.

Kimberly-Clark said it had discussions with Pentaplex last year, after the complaint was made. "We were trying to address the question, but those discussions were never concluded," a spokesman said. "At the end of last week, the writ was issued."

Sir Roger's wife was the first to notice the embossed pattern, which appears on the

Continued on page 2, col 5



The Penrose Pattern

## Secret runners join marathon treadmill

By David Powell and John Goodbody

AS THE 40,000 or so runners in this year's Flora London Marathon set off from Blackheath tomorrow they will have hidden company. In more than 60 gymnasiums and health clubs up and down Britain, another 1,500 would-be competitors, unable to gain a place in the real race, will take part too - on treadmills.

To spur them on, they will be able to watch the official runners on television screens. The project, devised by the Cancer Research Campaign and dubbed *Marathon Mania*, is expected to raise £20,000 for the charity.

Tracy Cooper, of the Cancer Research Campaign, said: "We get so many calls from people who do not get places, this way everybody can take part." Just as each participant who completes the 26 miles

385 yards from Blackheath to The Mall will get a finisher's Flora foil blanket, so will the unseen marathoners.

However, some of tomorrow's treadmill runners will have a head start. Those who did not fancy the distance in one press of a button have been allowed to cover it in stages. They have made their way, slowly but surely, for the past two weeks, charting progress on a course map.

The whole idea stemmed from the disappointment of Annette Owen, who trained in a gym to help her recovery from ovarian cancer. She applied to enter the 1995 London Marathon but was rejected, so decided that, having trained on a treadmill, she would run the marathon on one.

Marathon preview, page 47

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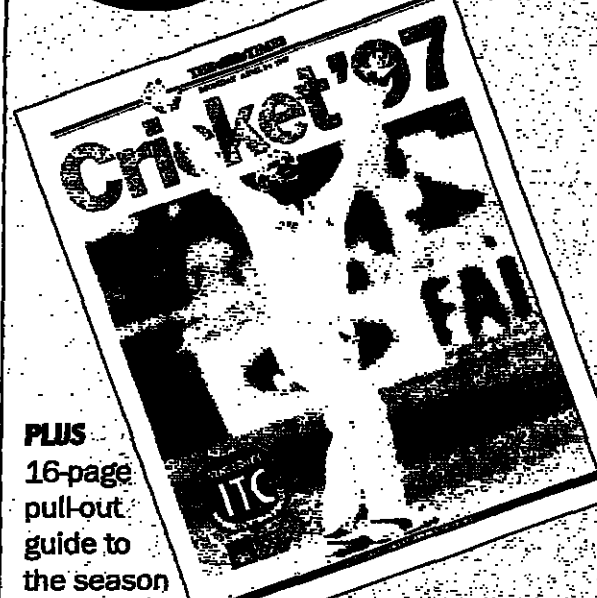
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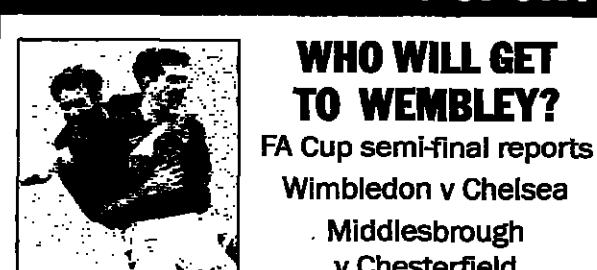
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## Firefighters' strike vote may spread nationwide

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

FIREFIGHTERS voted yesterday to stage a series of one-day strikes in Essex over a proposed £1.5 million budget cut in the service by the county council. Their industrial action could spread nationwide.

Council chiefs immediately warned the Fire Brigades Union that strikers could face suspension or dismissal if they go ahead with their action, starting with a 24-hour walk-out a week today followed by a four-hour walkout on Monday, April 21.

As 300 troops stood by to man a fleet of elderly Green Goddesses appliances, the union responded with a threat that if any firefighters were sacked, a ballot would be called of its 50,000 members for a national strike.

Some 58.2 per cent of Essex's 900-plus firefighters voted for strikes, despite a guarantee by Chris Pearson, the Labour leader of the council in which there is a shared administration with the Liberal Democrats, that there would be no redundancies or fire station closures and that all pay awards will be honoured.

The union replied that public safety was at risk because the Essex Brigade was already 16 short of its Home Office-approved strength of 928, a discrepancy that would increase to 50 by the end of the year because of a council freeze on recruitment.

John Sherrington, the coun-

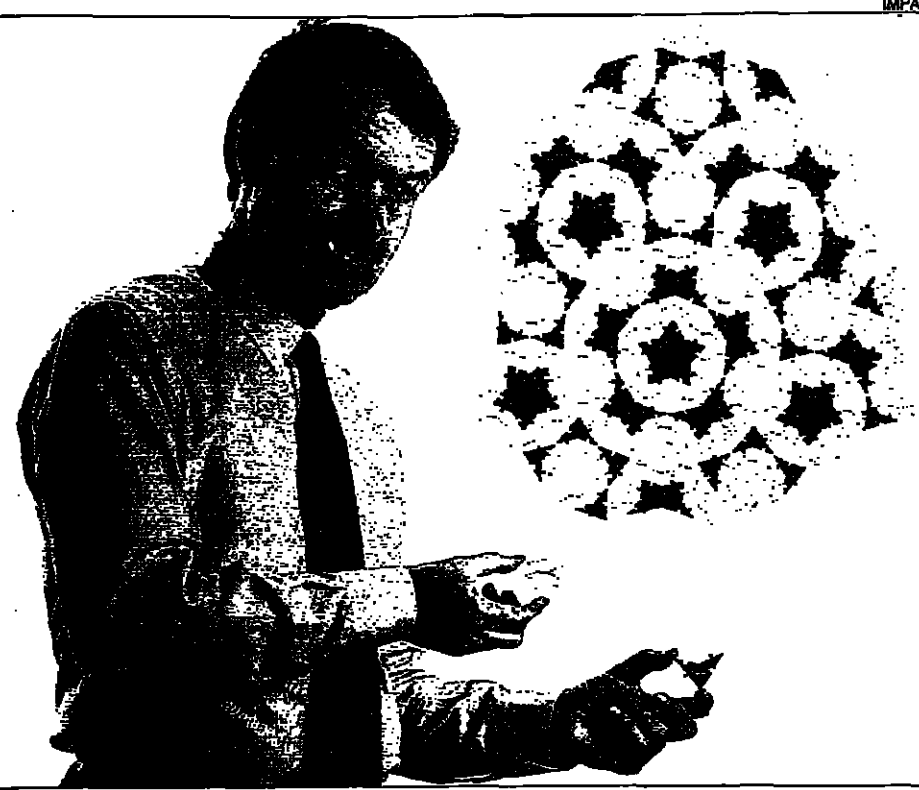
ty's chief fire officer said: "This dispute will have to be settled around the table and not on a picket line."

The Green Goddesses will be manned by troops from 24 Airmobile Brigade, who are based at the army garrison in Colchester. They will be deployed at 14 towns throughout the county.

Mr Pearson blamed government-enforced cuts of £51 million in the council budget which he said had been reduced to £22 million through the use of council reserve funds. He condemned the "spurious" claims of the firefighters whose action placed lives at risk. He said: "This is a very disappointing and selfish decision. We have been explaining to the Fire Brigades Union for several months the dire financial position Essex has been placed in by central government. Yet the firefighters appear blind to logic and reason."

The bill for alternative fire cover could cost the authority £1 million a month, he said, and was already costing £50,000 per week to keep the Green Goddesses on standby. As the brigade announced its strike, members of the Fire Brigades Union in London and counties surrounding Essex were being balloted on a policy of non-cooperation with army firefighters on strike days.

Tory attack, page 10



Sir Roger Penrose, who says his copyright has been infringed by Kimberly-Clark

## Scientist sues over humble roll

Continued from page 1

tissues and until recently also featured on product packaging. Richard Kempner, of Addleshaw Booth, the lawyer handling the suit, said that, as Sir Roger's "original artistic work", the pattern was automatically protected under copyright law. "We think we have a very strong case," he added.

"Kimberly-Clark's only defence would be that they had created the pattern independently, and we think they will find that very hard to prove. In one of their US patent applications for embossed tissue, they actually say that the pattern closely approximates that known as the Penrose Pattern."

Mr Kempner says that Sir Roger is entitled to all the additional profits that the company has earned as a result of using his pattern.

adding: "That could be a large amount."

Quilted tissue has the advantage of achieving softness and absorbency while using less paper. In addition, a pattern that does not repeat itself regularly has the advantage that successive layers on

the rolls are less likely to stick together.

Sir Roger's action is a far cry from his usual scientific and mathematical work. He collaborated with Professor Stephen Hawking of Cambridge in studies of black holes in space. Their theorems in 1964 laid the basis for much subsequent work in cosmology. He has been interested in geometrical figures for many years, first working on them with his father, the geneticist Lionel Penrose.

□ Lavatory paper was first sold in New York in 1857 by Joseph C. Gayetty. It cost 50 cents for 500 loose sheets and was known as "Gayetty's Medicated Paper" — a perfectly pure article for the toilet and the prevention of piles. The first toilet rolls were sold by Seth Wheeler in New York in 1871, and by Walter Alcock in Britain in 1879.



A close-up of a sheet of Kleenex lavatory paper

## How Major got his smile back on a bruising roller-coaster ride

Continued from page 1

night in which you played the lead role, woke up next morning to sneering and scathing reviews in every paper. Now, imagine you had to go on waking to those reviews, dawn after dawn, year after year. That was not his idea of a buzz.

Major, so far from being an unusually phlegmatic man, is unusually easily bruised. But he is not a quitter. He keeps fighting and it keeps hurting. The result is that he

gets very bruised indeed, and for long periods. His mood swings suddenly. On Tuesday in Birmingham, after another weekend's bad press and the opinion polls apparently stuck, his top lip looked like cardboard. At that morning's press conference he kept his head immobile and facial muscles tight, smiling once in half an hour. His eyes were narrow. He blinked often but slowly. The expression was dull and heavy, like Garfield the Cat. His voice lost all light and shade. The

overall impression was of huge but frozen anger, depression and fatigue. On Thursday morning *The Times* printed a MORI poll suggesting a swing from Labour to the Conservatives. But that was not all: there had been a change in the wind. Tony Blair had looked rattled and new doubts about new Labour and its leader hung in the air. You might think an old pro like John Major would have been ready to disregard this possible blip. But his demeanour

at that morning's press conference said otherwise. I challenge experts in physiognomy to freeze-frame the video and take a ruler to Mr Major's eyes. They were wider. His mouth moved. His lip flexed. His eyebrows rose. He smiled. He blinked less and at normal speed. His voice regained its elasticity.

By yesterday he was able to take, quite cheerfully, serious heckling in Norwich. By tomorrow it may all change. By Monday it may all

change back. What never changes is the capacity of men who have seen it all before, who have taken every imaginable knock, who have been flattered and insulted to the last degree, and who would — we might imagine — after 30 years on this roller-coaster — have been reduced to a heap of scar tissue encased in a human husk, to experience, as though still in the first years of their adolescence, huge despair — and sudden hope.

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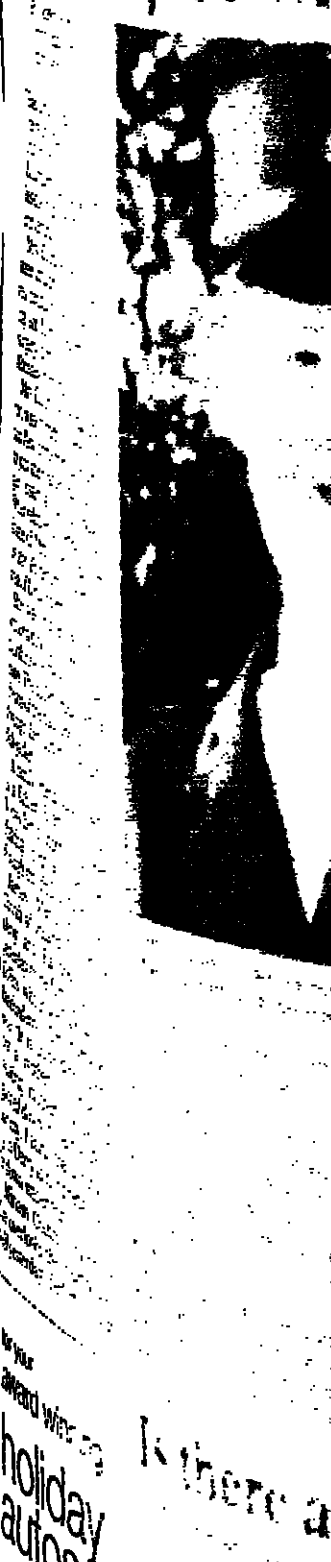
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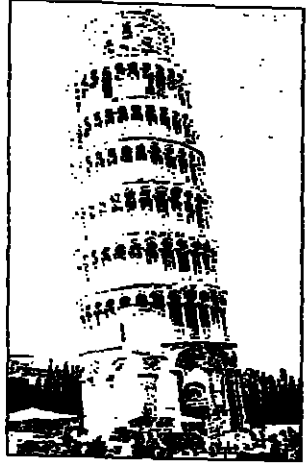
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Tons of lead has halted the Pisa tower toppling

## Briton helps stop Pisa tower toppling

By A STAFF REPORTER

The Leaning Tower of Pisa has been saved from toppling over by a British soil expert, who advised placing large amounts of lead on one side of its base.

"We are euphoric," John Burland, Professor of Soil Mechanics at Imperial College, London, said. "The tower has stopped its tilt. This is the greatest success in seven centuries. We did not aim to straighten the tower but halt its inclination — otherwise there would be no Leaning Tower."

Work started on the 179ft white marble tower in northern Italy in 1173 and took 186 years to complete. The professor was called in four years ago after it was calculated that the landmark, by then around 17ft off perpendicular, might topple by 2050.

Earlier attempts to halt the tilt, caused by layers of clay, mud and soil beneath it sinking unevenly, all failed. A decision in 1823 to excavate the walkway around the foundations caused the tower to lean by an extra 1ft.

On the professor's advice, 900 tons of lead was laid on the ground around its high side. The Italian Government invested £50 million in securing the 15,000-ton tourist attraction, closed seven years ago for safety.

Professor Burland said that his "quite phenomenally successful" idea had been based on a simple engineering calculation.

Police foiled active service unit's blitz on electricity substations, court told

## IRA gang 'planned to black out London and South East for months'

By STEWART TENDLER  
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

LARGE parts of London and the South East would have had no electricity for months if an IRA gang had succeeded last summer in destroying key power installations, the Old Bailey was told yesterday.

But the alleged plot to plunge consumers into darkness was foiled by a joint operation by police and the security services.

Nigel Sweeney, for the prosecution, said that seven members of an IRA active service unit were in London within months of the ceasefire ending. One of the gang came from an Irish-American background and had served in the US Marines where he specialised in demolition and explosives. Using detailed maps of the National Grid they were said to be preparing for a blitz on six sub-stations. An eighth man was to provide the group with support and find premises in the Birmingham area, where a lorry could be secretly unloaded, Mr Sweeney added.

But the gang was under surveillance by police and the Security Service as they reconnoitred their targets last summer. When police raided addresses in London and Birmingham they found National Grid maps indicating the targets and 37 units for powering and timing bombs set out in the basement of a rented home in Peckham, south London.

Yesterday amid tight security the eight all denied conspiracy to cause explosions between January and July last year. They are Gerard Hanratty, 38, Martin Murphy, 38, Donald Gannon, 34, Patrick Martin, 35, Robert Morrow, 37, Francis Rafferty, 45, John Crawley, 39, and Clive Brampton, 36.

Opening the prosecution case, Mr Sweeney said that seven of the men were members of an active service unit which had come over from Ireland to carry out the attacks. Mr Brampton was not part of the unit but provided support such as false identities. Mr Sweeney said that Mr Crawley served in the United



An artist's drawing of the accused, from left: Morrow, Crawley, Gannon, Rafferty, Brampton, Hanratty, Martin, and Martin Murphy

States Marines between 1975 and 1979. He had been part of a reconnaissance unit in Japan and specialised in map-reading as well as basic demolition, including how to handle explosives to maximum effect. In 1979 he was said to have been an instructor in amphibious reconnaissance in Virginia.

The jury was told that the "initial targets" of the gang were six electricity substations which together supplied the main external electrical feed to London from the National Grid. If the bombs had gone off they would have caused "serious and widespread loss of electricity to London and the South-East. Consumers would have been affected over a considerable period of time with little likelihood of supplies back to normal for months."

The substations surround London and are called Amersham Main, Epsom, Waltham Cross, Rayleigh

Main, West Weybridge and Canterbury North. Five of the six stations had been reconnoitred by members of the gang before they were arrested. Mr Sweeney said that each of the timing and power units found by police at a rented house in Peckham would have been used with 25kg of high-performance Semtex explosive and would have been capable of causing a powerful explosion.

Mr Sweeney said that the IRA ceasefire had been over

by some months by the time of the plan, but it must have taken some time to prepare. For that reason, he told the jury, the plot was alleged to have started at the beginning of 1996.

The gang spent £10,000 in buying equipment for the attacks. They rented a garage, two flats and the house as well as buying three cars. When the alleged members of the active service unit were arrested they had another £14,700 in cash.

Mr Sweeney said that Mr Crawley adopted an American accent as part of his disguise when the gang were making arrangements. Mr Morrow used French papers, adopted a French accent and called himself Jean-Louis Benzaquen.

The gang bought bolt cutters and six extending ladders, which were cut up and adapted to fit into the boots of cars. The ladders could be put together again. While the

gang were under surveillance Mr Gannon was watched at Battersea public library as he researched the electrical supply industry and made notes from a book called the *Electricity Supply Handbook*.

A map of the National Grid was found to be missing from the book and one was later found in a flat used by the gang. Police were also watching when Mr Gannon and Mr Murphy met at a station at Wimbledon Park in south London. They saw Mr Rafferty looking at people's ears to make sure they were not wearing radio earpieces.

Mr Sweeney told the jury that by July 14 last year preparations were reaching an advanced stage. Final planning and the delivery of Semtex and detonators had to be made. When the police struck the next day they found a map of the National Grid at a rented flat in Tooting, south London, as well as false identities

and notes of timing units.

At the house in Peckham the batteries for the timing units were on charge. There were maps for two of the substations and how to get to each of them. The seven alleged members of the unit refused to say anything when they were interviewed, Mr Sweeney said.

Mr Rafferty went on hunger strike. Mr Crawley admitted renting the garage and the Tooting flat under a false name and said he thought he was taking part in a social security fraud and that he and the others were going on an innocent camping trip.

Mr Brampton told police he had made contact with a man he knew was linked to the IRA because he wanted help with a bad debt in Ireland. He had been asked to find premises in Birmingham where a lorry could be unloaded. The case continues

## Principal criticised over £8m college deficit

By DAVID CHARTER  
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

THE sacked principal of a college with an £8 million budget shortfall bullied staff and was guilty of "wilful neglect", an auditors' report said yesterday.

An inquiry by Coopers & Lybrand found the relationship between Neil Preston, principal of Stoke-on-Trent College, and a senior female colleague, was one factor which put public funds at the college at risk.

Mr Preston and Helen Chandler, his marketing manager, were dismissed on Christmas Eve after the college investigated a series of complaints by staff about their behaviour.

The pair had been absent on paid sick leave since September and were found by *The Times* in November running a pub in North Wales. After their departure from the 21,000-student college, the funding shortfall was discovered which led the new management to plan 200 redundancies.

Coopers & Lybrand was asked to investigate the way financial and management controls had broken down. In its report yesterday, it said the controls were damaged by Mr Preston's style, his close working relationship with George Mardle, the former chairman of governors, and "the effect of the personal relationship" between him and Mrs Chandler.

The report found the two managers stifled any dissent to their decisions by treating others with "open hostility or ridicule" in front of the rest of the senior management team.

When the college decided to change its system for collecting student data, Mr Preston and Mrs Chandler took control from the finance director. In 1995-96 they missed every deadline for sending information to the Further Education Funding Council and ended up vastly overestimating the money they were due.

Mr Preston and Mrs Chandler were unavailable for comment yesterday. They have both lodged claims for unfair dismissal with an industrial tribunal.

## Ulster PC fights for life after sniper shooting

By NICHOLAS WATT  
CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE family of Alice Collins, the police constable who was shot by an IRA sniper in Londonderry, gathered at her bedside in an intensive care unit yesterday.

Mrs Collins, 46, who has three children, was in a serious condition after undergoing six hours of emergency surgery during the night at Altnagelvin Hospital.

Mrs Collins's eldest daughter, who is pregnant, and her son flew home from England to join their father and younger sister at the hospital. Other relatives gathered at the home of Mrs Collins's father in the Protestant Waterside area of Londonderry.

She was shot in the back while on duty outside the city's courthouse on Thursday afternoon. The bullet struck her at the top of the back and passed through her upper body and flak-jacket.

A family friend said: "Alice is a fighter. Everybody who knows her is hoping that her fighting spirit will see her through this difficult time."

James Meahaffey, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, spoke yesterday to the family of Mrs Collins, who is well known in Londonderry. Dr Meahaffey said: "It is quite devastating that a mother of three, a working mother, should be gunned down in the middle of our city. I think the community in Derry is not prepared to lie down under this."

Miriam Collins, whose office overlooks the courthouse, told yesterday of efforts to help



Alice Collins, a well-known RUC officer in Londonderry, had six hours of emergency surgery after the shooting

Mrs Collins after the shooting: "I heard a bang and ran downstairs into the street where I saw Alice lying on the ground with her colleagues trying to assist her. We put her into the recovery position. Two off-duty nurses tried to stem the bleeding from her wounds."

Ms Collins, 40, originally from the Irish Republic and not related to the constable, said: "I am appalled that I

have come face to face with evil."

The shooting prompted loyalist leaders to warn yesterday of a possible "revenge attack" by Protestant terrorists. David Ervine, of the Progressive Unionist Party, the political wing of the Ulster Volunteer Force, urged loyalists not to follow the "IRA's agenda". But he added: "The situation is very bad within the loyalist community."

## Child sees mother die in garden accident

By PAUL WILKINSON

A MOTHER died yesterday after a tree branch fell on her head as she was mowing the lawn. Her four-year-old daughter witnessed the accident and ran into the street shouting "Mummy's poorly".

Neighbours called an ambulance but Sharon Beale, aged in her early 30s, was already dead. Her husband Andrew was working in Italy. He was preparing to fly home to Wistow, North Yorkshire, last night to comfort their children, Harriet, 4, and Nicholas, 5.

Phil Wade, assistant divisional officer of Selby fire station, said the branch of the 90-year-old ash tree, which was about 18ins in diameter, fell because it was rotten. "The tree was outside the garden wall but the branch must have been overhanging the garden."

"She had a young daughter playing in the area, and apparently she ran up and down the road saying 'My mummy's poorly' and somebody rang 999," Mr Wade said that by the time officers got to the scene there was nothing that could be done. "It looks like she was killed instantly."

George Hill who runs a garage business across the village said: "There was gust of wind, just like a whirlwind or a tornado, seconds before I heard a loud crash. Then I saw the branch of the ash tree fall into the garden."

The children were being cared for by relatives last night.

## Is there a tax adviser in the house?

By STEPHEN FARRELL

A TAX consultant trying to sell advice to a hospital anaesthetist paged him on his emergency beeper in mid-operation. Security staff who traced the call found Peter Gooch dialling from a telephone in the hospital dining room with a list of doctors' work and pager numbers. The John Radcliffe Hospi-

tal in Oxford is now demanding an explanation from the Manchester tax consultancy Chancellors Group. Chancellors says that the anaesthetist, Dr Hugh Howells, gave the consultant his pager number after agreeing to an appointment.

It said lists of doctors' names were sold by many organisations, including the British Medical Association,

adding that a doctor who had made an appointment with a tax consultant unfamiliar with the layout of the hospital might give him his pager number in case of a problem.

The British Medical Association confirmed that it did sell lists of doctors, but said that they contained only home addresses for mailing purposes, not work telephone or pager numbers.

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## Teenager dies on school skiing trip

By Adam Fresco

A SIXTH former died on a school skiing trip hours after winning the prize as the best skier when he fell 60ft from a hotel balcony.

Martin Mahoney, 17, was on a week-long break at Badgastein in Austria when the incident happened on Thursday evening, the last day of the trip. He was found by one of his friends, who tried to revive him. Austrian police were yesterday trying to discover how he managed to fall from the balcony at the Hotel Bristol.

His father, also called Martin, a probation officer, said yesterday: "It still hasn't sunk in yet that Martin won't be coming home. The bottom has fallen out of our world."

The dead boy, from Cardiff, was studying A levels in geography, computing and geology at St David's College in the city. His mother, Pat, a college lecturer, said: "He wanted to go to university in Bath but he hadn't decided on a career yet. All he knew was that he wanted to work outdoors."

Derek Bodey, the college principal, said: "Martin was a very popular student. He was an asset to our community and his loss will be felt deeply by us all."

The Foreign Office said that a full investigation would be carried out.

## Oxford student who feared exams is found hanged

By Emma Wilkins

AN OUTSTANDING Oxford University history student was found hanged in her room after seeking counselling for depression over her final examinations.

Sarah Napuk, 22, an undergraduate at Lady Margaret Hall, had already won a postgraduate scholarship to Harvard to continue her studies. She was expected to achieve first-class honours in her finals in June.

Miss Napuk's body was found hanging in her bedroom in Oxford on Thursday lunchtime. Thames Valley police said.

Sir Brian Fall, the principal of Lady Margaret Hall, said: "She was extraordinarily gifted academically and an outstanding student of this university. The quality of her work has been at the level to produce a first throughout her time here."

"Sarah played an enormously supportive role in welfare issues throughout the college. She went out of her way to advise and help people she found in trouble," he said.

Sir Brian said Miss Napuk had sought advice from the college's medical and counselling services, but he could not give further details of confidential information.

Miss Napuk, who was engaged to be married to Jason Russell, a fellow student, ran the women's rugby team at the college. She was a prominent member of the History Society

and a former vice-president of the Junior Common Room at the college, where Benazir Bhutto studied 20 years ago.

Kerry Napuk, an American businessman and his wife Angela, who live in Edinburgh, are devastated by their daughter's death. Her brother David, 20, a student at York University, said his sister may have fallen victim to exam pressure. "The system at university puts so much pressure on people to the point of this sort of thing happening," he said.

"Sarah was the greatest person I ever knew and she always will be. She was loved by everyone and she gave love to everyone. She was a great woman in every single aspect. Everyone who knew her loved her. She helped everyone she knew. She was always fighting for causes and helping to make things better for everyone."

He said his sister had returned home for Easter and appeared to be in good spirits. "She seemed okay. If she hadn't, then I would have gone back down with her," he said.

Miss Napuk was a pupil at the Mary Erskine School in Edinburgh, where she was head girl, before winning a place at Oxford. On her year off, Miss Napuk undertook aid work in the Middle East.

Thames Valley police, who are not treating the death as suspicious, said Miss Napuk's

body was found by a friend who called round because she had not kept an appointment for coffee.

College friends said Miss Napuk had been very worried about her exams. One said: "She did say she was very worried about not getting a first, but I'm sure she would have got one. She said that she was going to be the only one at Harvard with a second-class degree, but I thought she was only joking."

The college had one previous suicide five years ago when a student, Tracey Cole, 18, killed herself less than a fortnight after arriving at Oxford. Miss Napuk's death comes a day after an inquest into the death of Alexander Hall, an economics student at Swansea University. Mr Hall, 20, gassed himself in his car, the inquest was told.

A recent report into suicides among students at Oxford found that the rate was 30 per cent higher than the national average for 18 to 24-year-olds. The report also discovered that suicides at the university were significantly lower than in the 20 years before and after the Second World War.

As a result of the report, which was published in 1993, the University Counselling Service more than doubled in size. Individual college support systems were strengthened and newcomers to the university were offered advice on how to adapt to college life.



Miss Napuk, who had won a scholarship to Harvard, sought help for depression

## Self-doubt plagues 'even most brilliant'

By David Charter  
Education Correspondent

A FEW outstanding students are prone to extreme levels of self-doubt, putting their lives at risk, a senior Oxford don said yesterday. An analysis of student suicides and suicide attempts at the university showed that many of those involved simply refused to accept their own brilliance.

The Rev Dr Ernest Nicholson, Provost of Oriel College and chairman of the university's student health committee, said: "If you have an extremely talented person racked with self-doubt and low self-esteem, it can be a terribly explosive mixture."

Dr Nicholson said he vividly remembered a suicide note from a brilliant student. "I am not perfect and I cannot accept it," the note was referred to in the Hawton Report, a study of the 21 undergraduate suicides and 254 attempts between 1976 and 1990.

The report said there were varied and complex reasons for the incidents. But Dr Nicholson added: "One has to bear in mind the very sad fact that not all suicides are preventable. All too often it was someone you would least have expected."

Madeline Portwood, an educational psychologist for Durham education authority, said suicide was ten times more likely in the run-up to exams, and that students at Oxford and Cambridge were especially under pressure. "They think that everyone is going to be let down if they don't achieve what they're expected to," she said.

## Teachers who went on strike over disruptive boy may lose jobs

By John O'Leary  
Education Editor

TWO of the teachers who went on strike last autumn rather than teach a ten-year-old boy with a record of classroom disruption face the sack because so many parents have withdrawn children from the school.

The governors of Manton School in Worsley, Nottinghamshire, have issued provisional notices of redundancy to the teaching staff of eight. They meet in the next month to set a budget with the likelihood that one

or two teaching posts will have to go to balance the books.

More than 20 children were withdrawn from Manton during and after last year's dispute over teaching Matthew Wilson. The school was closed for eight days when the previous governing body twice overturned the head teacher's recommendation that the boy should be expelled. The staff voted to strike rather than accept Matthew back into class. He was eventually transferred to nearby St Augustine's School, and Eileen Bennett, the chairwoman of the govern-

nors, resigned, insisting that the boy's behaviour did not warrant expulsion and claiming that the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers was using the dispute for recruitment purposes.

Neil Moore, the head teacher of St Augustine's, said that Matthew had settled in so well that he had been made a door monitor. "A lot of the problems he had were to do with the attention that he received. He told me he was determined to put that behind him."

At Manton, however, the school

roll has dropped from 207 to 185 in a year and in January local authority inspectors criticised its management. The inspectors' report found that too large a share of the budget was spent on teachers' salaries.

Fred Riddell, who chairs Nottinghamshire's education committee, said that pupil numbers at Manton were likely to drop by another 20 in September, making it almost certain that the governors would have to shed teaching posts. "I warned at the time of the dispute that if there was a strike by teachers it would result in parents losing confidence

in the school and would mean that some parents would withdraw their children," Councillor Riddell said.

However, leaders of the NASUWT, which represents most of the teachers at Manton, argued that it was the governors who were to blame. Eamonn O'Kane, the deputy general secretary, said: "To suggest that the teachers precipitated the problems at Manton is putting the cart before the horse. The problems were already there, and the governors ensured that the dispute went the way it did by acting in a quite disgraceful way. They

focused public attention on the youngster and allowed the problems to develop."

Mr O'Kane said the union would press for voluntary redundancy or redeployment to another school, if the governors cut jobs.

Parents are threatening to withdraw their children from Wansley Primary School near Hull next week if Kevin Crabb, its suspended head teacher, is not reinstated. He may face disciplinary action for allegedly slapping two pupils, although the Crown Prosecution Service has decided not to press charges.



Matthew: doing well

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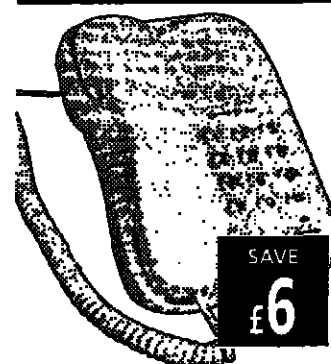
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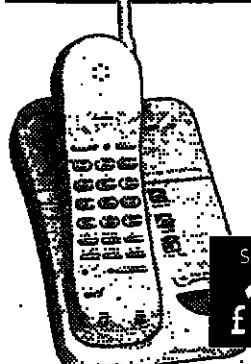
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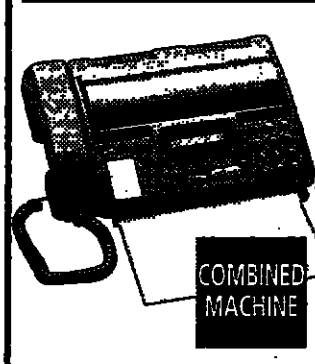
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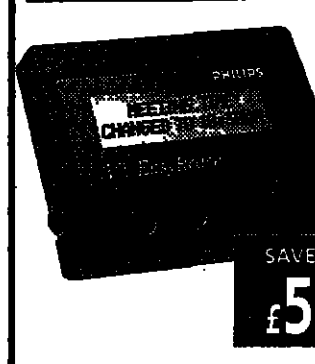
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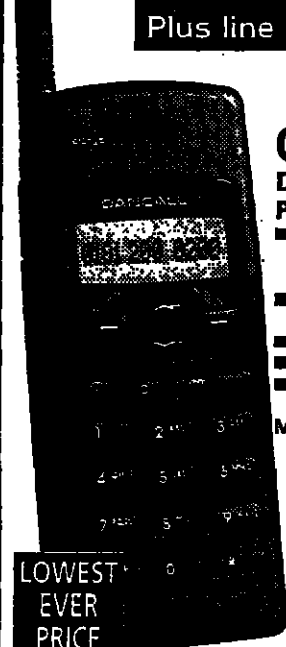
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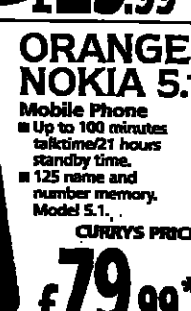
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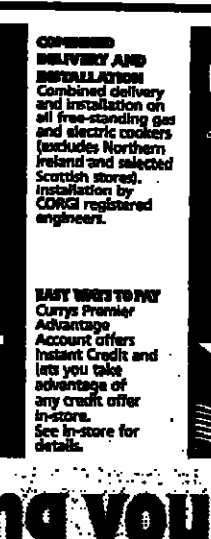
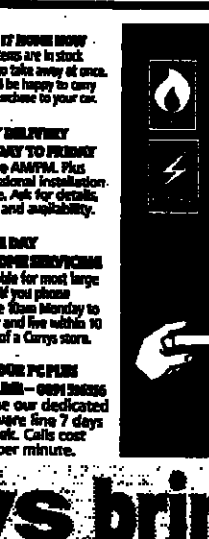
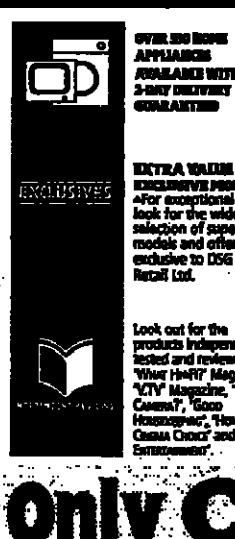
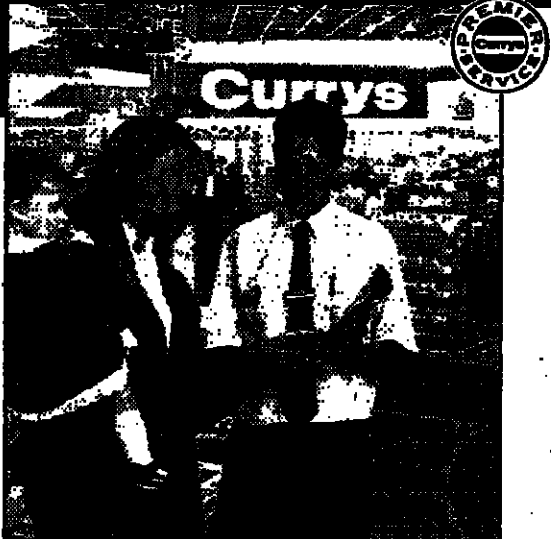
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## Tribal chiefs accuse politicians of destroying their culture and traditions

## Canadian Indians protest at ban on fur imports

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

CANADIAN Indians visited London yesterday to demand that the Government cancel its proposed ban of fur imports.

Resplendent in traditional tribal costume, Indians from the Cree, Ojibway and Sarnia nations gathered outside Parliament and accused politicians of destroying their culture and traditions, which are based on hunting mink, beaver and fox.

Under a proposed European Union directive, which Britain strongly supports, furs from animals killed by leghold traps and other traditional methods will be banned. But yesterday Chief Ovide Mercredi, a Cree and the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, the principal Canadian Indian organisation, accused politicians of double standards and being smug about animal welfare.

After a traditional Indian cleansing ceremony in which lemongrass and sage were burnt in a shell to represent renewal, and the vapours passed from person to person with the beat of a drum, the chief said that by bowing to the demands of animal welfare activists, politicians were gradually destroying the livelihoods of the 623 indigenous communities in Canada. This led many to turn to alcohol and drugs, and commit suicide. Three quarters of fur trapped by the Indians is sold to the European market and they have no other source of income. "If the ban goes ahead the EU will be responsible for cultural genocide," Chief Mercredi said. "We have already suffered a lot and our culture is gradually disappearing. Our land is like the crofters' land in northern Scotland — most of it cannot be used for agriculture and we have very little other means of earning our livelihood."



Queen Victoria gave Indians trapping rights

He said many Indians were now dispossessed, living in substandard housing, with a 70 per cent unemployment rate. They had no means of developing an economy and no autonomy. Suicide rates among the indigenous peoples were four times higher than in the rest of Canada.

The chief, accompanied by Chief Ray Rogers, from the Chippewas of Sarnia, and Chief Willie Littlechild of the Ojibway, said that around 170,000 Indians would be directly affected by the ban. "When your people were listening to the animal welfare

movement, what were they thinking off? They should obey the laws they make, laws which exist for the sake of humanity. No one can exist without a livelihood."

Chief Mercredi said that the directive violated an international covenant signed in 1966 which stated that in no case could people be deprived of their subsistence. It also violated treaties signed in the 19th century by Queen Victoria honouring indigenous ways of life.

"The Government should be ashamed of itself for violating a treaty made by Queen Victoria that gives our people a right to trap. Study your history and look at how much wealth you derived from the fur trade in the early days of colonisation. Now you will allow those who provided it to be destroyed."

The chief reserved strong words for the animal welfare activists. "Don't be so smug about animal rights," he said. "Our people respect the earth and the land, we respect the sacredness of all life. We pray before we set our traps and when the animal is caught. We respect all life, human and animal. We live on the Earth and give back to the Earth."

Around 5 per cent of the trappers use leghold traps but most use conifer traps, which kill more quickly. But Chief Mercredi said most Europeans missed the point on animal issues.

"I am often asked how humane our methods of killing are, and it seems by humane killing you mean killing the animal quickly. Are these the standards you employ everywhere? In that case I ask you if you know how



Chief Ray Rogers, left, and Chief Willie Littlechild in Westminster yesterday

quickly the chickens you eat have been killed, the cows and lambs?"

Earlier, the tribesmen had hoped to meet the Queen to present their case, but had to

content themselves with a traditional prayer meeting outside Buckingham Palace by the Queen Victoria Memorial. The Indians, who have already visited several other

European capitals, aim to disrupt celebrations at home later this year marking the 500th anniversary of the discovery of Canada, which the Queen will be attending.

## Computer buff takes offence at cover-up

By A STAFF REPORTER

A SYSTEMS analyst who enjoys strolling naked round his garden is ignoring police warnings to cover up. Alan Raynor says he is determined to defend an Englishman's right to do what he wants in his own castle — in his case a semi-detached house.

Mr Raynor, 50, of Ledbury, Hereford and Worcester, who is divorced and lives alone, said the house next door was being renovated, "but I could have been seen from an unofficial footpath which runs past my garden."

The fact is that anyone passing who does not like what they see can simply look the other way. So far as I am concerned, it comes down to a person's right to do what they wish on their own property. I have had no complaints from neighbours and I wasn't even aware of any gossip until police called and said there had been a complaint."

He added: "If I feel like getting up and feeling the morning dew under my feet, which I have to admit is quite pleasurable, then why shouldn't I be able to do it?"

"It is not a matter of decency. I just want the freedom to walk in my garden in any way I please, look at my plants and sit on the grass if I want to."

Police warned Mr Raynor, a freelance computer software development consultant, that he is in danger of breaching the 1924 Vagrancy Act, which deals with indecent exposure. Inspector Geoff Maynor, of Ledbury police, said: "We have no wish to curtail his lifestyle but he could fall foul of the law of indecent exposure."

"If someone is in their back garden and there is a naked man next door, they could easily take offence."

Mr Raynor said privacy would be improved in the next few weeks when he replaced his sweet pea canes.

## Protesters appeal over eviction

Protesters occupying the site of Manchester airport's planned second runway have lodged an appeal against a court order for their eviction. The campaigners, who include the nunner known as Swampy, yesterday lost a High Court battle to stay on the land in the Bollin Valley, near Styal, Cheshire.

Swampy, real name Daniel Hooper, is to be paid £750 to appear as Paul Merton's partner on *Have I Got News For You*, the BBC2 news quiz hosted by Angus Deayton.

## Drugs charge

A man arrested by police investigating the murder of Irish journalist Veronica Guerin has been charged with drug offences. Patrick Eugene Holland, 58, of no fixed address, was remanded in custody for a week by a court at Kilmarnock, Dublin.

## Tube acquittal

Dorian Fallon, 23, of Southgate, north London, was cleared at the Old Bailey of endangering Tube passengers' lives. He had denied throwing a concrete slab which hit the driver's cab of a Piccadilly line train in February 1996. Nobody was hurt.

## Desert runner

Chris Moon, 33, a former soldier who lost his right leg when he stepped on a landmine in Mozambique in 1995, has reached the halfway stage in one of the world's toughest events, a 145-mile race across the Sahara. He was placed 306 in a field of 355.

## National cheer

The people of Aintree are being offered a free drink at 22 pubs between 1pm and 8pm today by Martell Cognac, sponsor of the Grand National, in appreciation of their generosity to stranded visitors after last Saturday's race was postponed after IRA threats.

## Barristers face fines for being rude

By FRANCES GIBB  
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

RUDE or slipshod barristers may have to reduce their fees or pay compensation of up to £2,000 under a complaints system launched yesterday.

The system enables members of the public to complain about "inadequate professional services", and will be overseen by Michael Scott, an independent lay complaints commissioner. Mr Scott, a former major-general recruited after the new post was publicly advertised, said yesterday: "I am a layman so I have no legal handbaggage with me. My aim is to give a fair deal to people while protecting barristers from frivolous complaints."

The new system applies to barristers' advisory or out-of-court preparatory work, but will not deal with complaints

over court performance, in line with the Bar's statutory immunity which protects barristers from being sued for negligence over their work in court.

Complainants will be able to obtain compensation only where they have suffered financial loss that would be recoverable in a court action. Losses might include wasted travel expenses and costs incurred through rectifying shoddy work. Compensation will not be paid for distress or inconvenience.

Every complaint will be vetted by Mr Scott. Where they are justified, he will seek to resolve the complaint through informal conciliation. If this is not possible, a panel of Mr Scott, two lawyers and another lay person will decide if fees should be reduced or compensation paid.

The more serious complaints that appear to involve professional miscon-

duct will go, as now, to the professional conduct and complaints committee of the Bar Council, which may decide to refer it to a disciplinary tribunal with powers to reprimand, fine, suspend or disbar barristers.

Mr Scott, whose army career included commanding the 2nd Battalion Scots Guards in the battle for Mount Tumbledown in the Falklands, said: "Inadequate professional service covers the sort of thing where a barrister has been rude, or late, or been idle about returning his papers, or been arrogant with his client, which is not, I understand, unheard of."

There are about 450 complaints a year from about 1 million cases handled by just under 9,000 barristers. About 15 per cent of the complaints resulted in disciplinary action. The scheme will apply to complaints arising since last July.



Scott: lay commissioner who will vet complaints

## Bar to launch spot checks on compliance with equality code

By FRANCES GIBB

SPOT checks on barristers' chambers to find out if they are complying with the new Bar equality code will be announced by the chairman of the Bar today at the third Woman Lawyer conference in London.

Under the code, adopted by the Bar Council last year, chambers are expected to have fair recruitment policies in force, as well as complaints procedures about unequal treatment in areas such as the allocation of briefs by clerks.

Chambers that are found not to be complying with the code are likely to be given deadlines to put their house in order or face disciplinary action.

Robert Owen, QC, will unveil the initiative before some 300 lawyers and judges attending the conference, organised by the Law Society and the Bar, and sponsored by *The Times*. Leading legal figures taking part include Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls; Peter Goldsmith, QC, former chairman of the Bar Council; Cherie Booth, QC,

just elected Legal Personality of the Year; and Helena Kennedy, QC.

The main theme of the conference is the disparity in earnings between men and women in the legal profession. A survey last year for the Law Society found that women solicitors were facing "shameful discrimination" over pay levels. Their male counterparts were found to be earning significantly more, even allowing for differences in age and experience, and the gap widened the higher up the career scale women rose.



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## Catholic bishops link poor exam results to poverty

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE gap between schools' performance in rich and poor areas will widen if unrestrained competition is allowed, according to a report of the Roman Catholic bishops of England and Wales. A *Struggle for Excellence* makes a direct link between poverty, wealth and school results.

Although not condemning league tables outright, the report calls for them to take account of other factors as well as examination results to allow parents to compare "like with like" when choosing a school for their child.

The report finds that schools with a larger percentage of pupils eligible for free meals have correspondingly lower GCSE results. Pupils at Catholic secondary schools tended to perform better than the national average, except in the poorest schools, where more than six in ten pupils were eligible for free lunches; their results were universally dismal in Catholic and non-

Catholic schools. It also calls for more flexible and equitable funding for schools and for the scale of need in poor, urban areas to be recognised.

According to figures prepared for the bishops by Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, a clear correlation exists between poverty and examination results.

There are 450 Catholic secondary schools in England and Wales, 10 per cent of the total. The report analyses the difficulties and results of 27 Catholic schools in poor, urban areas through interviews with head teachers.

Although the results of most schools in the consultation were below the national average, the report looks at all the conditions facing the pupils and teachers, and concludes that "almost without exception, the participating schools appear to be succeeding against great odds".

It cites the head of one school in an area where nine

out of ten adults are unemployed and the school exists amid drugs, gangs and racism. Even though the school has no football pitch, 13 old boys have become professional footballers. Another is trying to become a haven in an area of racism, drugs and gangs. "Children try to bring all that into the school," the head says. "We have excluded 15 boys, for example for bringing carving knives into school."

In one school, where half the children get free meals, a quarter pass GCSEs and girls are kept away to care for siblings or sick mothers, the atmosphere has been turned around to the point where the school is oversubscribed. "After five years' study, the bishops of England and Wales have decided not to change the Holydays when Catholics must attend Mass."

At Your Service  
Weekend, page 15



Father Graham: the first Englishman to head the order for more than 450 years

## Augustinian Friars break habit

By RUTH GLEDHILL

FATHER Paul Graham of Clare Priory, Suffolk, has become the first Englishman since the Reformation to be elected provincial of the Augustinian Friars in England and Scotland.

Father Paul will head the eight communities in the order's English and Scottish province for a four-year term, succeeding Father Seamus

Ahearne of Carlisle. The Augustinian order, based in Rome, has no founder but came into being in 1256 when the Vatican brought together a group of hermits, some of whom had been following the rule of St Augustine of Hippo.

The Austin Friars, as they became known, established the first British house at Clare in 1248.

The order was dissolved in 1538 by Henry VIII but sur-

vived in Ireland. It was re-established in England in the last century, and the new province of England and Scotland was founded in 1977.

Friars at Clare Priory, a community of lay people and friars which is popular for retreats, seek to live the Christian life according to the rule of St Augustine, which emphasises the need to search for God "to achieve oneness of mind and heart".

Credit

## Restraint by individual is path to true freedom

Ian Goodhardt

Jews observe the festival of Pesach (Passover) on April 22. This week-long celebration marks the freedom of the Jews from slavery in Egypt and the beginning of the Jewish nation as an independent sovereign entity.

Some have remarked that it seems merely to be the exchange of one slavery for another. Within days of leaving Egypt, Israel stood at the foot of Mount Sinai ready to receive hundreds of laws contained in the five books of Moses. Being subject to the laws of Pharaoh or the laws of

God, you are still subjugated, they say. This year Passover falls in the last full week of campaigning before the general election. I remember the late Robert Mackenzie remarking in admiration and wonder on one *Election Night Special* how

smoothly the wheels of democracy turn, as by the simple mechanism of a pencil cross on a piece of paper, an entire administration is removed from office and another takes its place. No shooting, no upheaval, simply the ordinary workings of a free and democratic state, and how fortunate we were to be among the minority of the world's population who live in such freedom.

Of course, there is a lot more to freedom than being able to vote for your government. Ask the old woman too scared to leave her house for fear of being mugged, or the illiterate youngster with no prospects and no aspirations. They can vote, but how free are they?

The Jewish people are a nation forged in slavery to understand and value the importance of freedom. And what it learned from that experience is that true freedom is the very opposite of allowing everyone to do exactly what they want. That leads to what Hobbes calls the state of nature, the war of all

against all, and that, in turn, leads to an inevitable impoverishment and shortening of life.

But rather than Hobbes's solution of handing responsibility for ensuring personal freedom to the leviathan of the state, Jewish teaching stresses *personal* restraint and discipline. This is the paradox of freedom: for one to be free, all must exercise discipline and restraint.

This has been the role of religion throughout the centuries. Speaking personally, I believe the teachings of the Bible to be true, and this is sufficient grounds for holding them up as the highest standards to which humanity can aspire. But even if you take a sociological, as distinct from a moral, view, the force of religious teaching has proved impressively effective in leading people to exercise the re-

straint in their own lives that leads to increased freedom for all. Our society tries to do without religion, tries to leave every moral decision for the individual to work out for themselves from first principles, with no guidance, no help. The only influence it brings to bear is the coercive and corrosive force of police and prison. We can see it does not work.

Passover is the primary festival whose seasonal timing is crucial to its message. The entire Jewish calendar is constructed to ensure that Passover always occurs in spring.

When everything starts again after winter, when new life is all around, now is the time for each person to consider their own life and the life of their community, and by imposing on themselves even a little more discipline and restraint, enhance their own freedom and that of us all.

Ian Goodhardt is rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation in Leeds.



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# ELECTION 97

POLL DAY  
-19

Ken Livingstone's stealthy  
'Iron curtain' campaign

Michael Evans page 15

Joe Joseph page 13

Why do politicians  
love posing with  
JCB's?

Glenda  
Jackson's  
starring role

page 12

## The week John Major began to hit back



The week in snapshot: Labour gets off to shaky start; Bell and Hamilton cause welcome diversion; poll blow to Labour; Major starts to look happier; filip for Labour as Browning embarrasses Tory leadership

### Philip Webster and Jill Sherman watch Labour flutter

IN THE huge war room on the first floor of Millbank Tower last Sunday Peter Mandelson, Labour's chief strategist, laid down the law.

Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, had just used a television interview to nudge Labour's policy on the single currency to the point where it was virtually ruled out for the next Parliament.

Mr Mandelson knew that the press would immediately try to out Mr Cook's new line on Gordon Brown, notably more Euro-enthusiast than Mr Cook, and to find out whether it was fully backed by Tony Blair. Surrounded by the aides who would be called on to brief all three, Mr Mandelson gave his orders: there must be no attempt to gloss Mr Cook's remarks. No impression of division could be afforded. They were carried out to the letter.

The policy was hardened overnight, with Mr Brown happily on board. It was the kind of control, the vital ingredient in Labour's usually tightly run ship, to which the political world had become

accustomed. In the same room this week the strategists listened with increasing horror as the BBC lunchtime news headlined their bulletins with stories that were not good for Labour: the Jaguar chairman disclaiming endorsement of its welfare-to-work programme, and twice with the increasingly arcane saga about whether Labour intended or not to privatise the air traffic control system.

Labour appeared to have lost control of the agenda and when *The Times* MORI poll on Wednesday night showed a big dent in its lead hearts began to pound a little.

It has been a week that has proved an old adage: the team in front is always the more vulnerable. It seems almost laughable ten years on, but the Conservative machine was close to falling apart on Wobley Thursday, one week before the 1987 election, which the Tories went on to win by 100

seats. The big opinion poll leads held by Labour for several years have always been doubled-edged. Party leaders have always known that the margins were unrealistic and expected that in the election run-up they would be severely cut back. And they always knew, too, that when that moment came they would have to hold their nerve.

What has dismayed some Labour insiders these past few days is that this supposedly brilliant Labour campaigning machine, the one that has self-consciously prided itself on winning the last two election campaigns even if it lost the election itself, has contributed heavily to its own problems.

Labour believes that there are three kinds of "switchers": those former Tory voters whose conversion, temporary or permanent, now account for the large Labour lead. There are the hard cases who have given up on the Conser-

vatives: there are those who say they are pretty confident of going over; and there are those who are looking for an excuse to go back.

When the campaign went askew last weekend, with a series of briefings adding up to stories that Labour was doing to a U-turn on the unions and privatisation, it gave that third group their reason for returning home. They probably would have done so at some point in the campaign; but here was an early opportunity.

Labour's uncomfortable week had begun with headlines in the morning newspapers last Saturday dominated by Mr Blair's alleged insult to the Scots over the powers of their parliament.

But by then Labour was also preparing a damage-limitation exercise over expected Sunday paper stories alleging secret deals with the unions. To deflect them, the spin doctors briefed the opposite and

more accurate story: that Mr Blair was to deny them much of what they wanted.

Perhaps the root of Labour's difficulties at that time had been the acknowledgement that there was a £1.5 billion hole in their finances, and what seemed to many in the party an almost indecent haste to suggest that Labour would if necessary fill the hole through privatisation.

That resulted in more Sunday stories suggesting that Labour would privatise anything that moved and led on to the great "our air is not for sale" row that refused to go away.

The message of those three episodes — no higher taxes in Scotland, no favours to the unions, no hostility to privatisation — was what Labour wanted to get across. But taken together they gave the impression of retreat and allowed John Major to begin his "campaign cracking up"

charges. And that was Labour's biggest error this week. Its behaviour transformed the start as Martin Bell launched his assault on Tattler, Mr Major by yesterday had become a bundle of laughs. He has not behaved like a man for whom political retirement allegedly is already beckoning.

Even yesterday, after the single currency made its first serious appearance in the election campaign and raised questions over the future of ministers who breached the agreed line, Mr Major refused to be daunted. He was always happy to take questions from "you rough lot" — unlike Mr Blair, around whom a cordon sanitaire had been erected. They were keeping him away as though he was the plague, or "New Black Death" Mr Major remarked, prompting side-splitting laughter from ministers and aides, one of

whom was responsible for the joke. Mr Major, with Michael Heseltine and, to a lesser extent, Kenneth Clarke, is the Tory campaign. When Mr Major is on form, Central Office hums. Labour privately admits that the Tory machine has been running better than it expected.

At Millbank Tower what happened this week was not so much a wobble as a flutter. Inexperience is a big factor. On that open-plan floor where each of the Shadow Cabinet has his or her "anchor" back at base, there are about 120 staff working virtually round the clock.

Most of them are young. At 49, David Hill, Labour's communications director, is the oldest. Some of them have wondered privately this week why their chiefs were not doing more to attack; where were Labour's big issues, health, education and unemployment? One or two may

even have panicked at the first whiff of things going wrong. One said: "We are not doing well. They are making the hits. We are watching them." Another suggested that Labour appeared to be "going through the motions".

The campaign chiefs are urging all to keep calm. It is reported by insiders that Mr Mandelson and Mr Brown, who fell out as friends at the leadership election in 1994, are working more closely together than they have for years.

An insider said: "There is no time for old rivalries." After yesterday's press conference Mr Brown loudly congratulated Mr Cook, another old adversary, on his performance.

The campaign chiefs say that the attack strategy is in place as it has always been. The "grid", the campaign plan locked up in the offices of Mr Mandelson and Mr Brown, has not changed.

The insiders deny a rethink, but the campaign is changing up a gear this weekend. Yesterday's assault on Europe was the first sign of that.

## Spin nurses keep media on message in the holding pen

James Landale and Polly Newton on the language of Labour's battle bus

THE strange enclosed world of the election battle-bus, where spin doctors, party leaders and journalists shuttle up and down the country for up to 18 hours a day, has begun to spawn a language of its own.

The Labour camp is the most creative but all parties, after three weeks on the road, are developing a jargon impenetrable to outsiders. The *Times* correspondents on the buses translate.

**Holding pen.** Area cordoned off for the media during Labour's stage-managed walkabouts to prevent easy access to Tony Blair. Example: "Get back into the holding pen now!" John Major calls them *cordons sanitaires*.

**Slightly corralled.** Labour spin-doctor description of what happens to the media in holding pens. Example: "Of course you will be able to talk to Mr Blair. You will only be slightly corralled."

**Spin nurses.** Junior Labour press officers, often women, who get frustrated when the media refuse to obey them. Example: "The spin nurses are getting their knickers in a twist again."



Labour's battle bus at the start of the campaign

**On message.** Spin doctor-speak for stories written by reporters which faithfully follow the party's agenda and report everything their leader has said, however uninteresting. Example: "Stay on message and I'll treat you right."

**Off message.** Opposite of the above, usually occurs when reporters actually manage to speak to ordinary members of the public who have not all been personally vetted by a press officer. Example: "Stay off message and I'll never give you a story again."

**Tight schedule.** Spin doctor-speak for the apparently urgent need for the media to get back on battle bus to avoid being late for the next stop. In reality, a device to prevent reporters talking to people who might be off message (see above). Example: "We are on a tight schedule, please get back on the bus now!"

**Muffins.** Name given by Tory men to the hordes of young blonde women who answer the phone in the press office at Conservative Central

Office. Example: "Don't worry, one of the muffins will make the tea."

**Mother.** Tory-speak for Baroness Thatcher. Example: "Mother is returning to the fold."

**A briefette.** A briefing done by Paddy Ashdown from the front of the top deck of his battle bus.

**A photo opportunity.** Liberal Democrat-speak for anything that involves their techno-head leader looking at computers.

**Paddy's rally speech (Take 1).** The text of Mr Ashdown's evening speech, issued to journalists under embargo in mid-afternoon. **Paddy's rally speech (Take 2).** The speech Paddy actually makes.

**TB.** Labour acronym for Tony Blair. Example: "TB's on the BB, the press on PB 1 and 2. ETA to ICA ASAP. Return ETA to MBT at 1430 hours." Translation: "Tony Blair is on the battle bus, the media are on press buses One and Two. Estimated time of departure for the Institute of Chartered Accountants is as soon as possible. Estimated time of arrival back at Millbank Tower (Labour's London HQ) 230pm."

### The Stamina Factor

John Major: 54

Freshness rating: HHHH

Miles travelled this week: 1,960

Hours spent campaigning on the streets: 23

Interviews: Average 9 per day

Press conferences or rallies: 5

Average working day: 19 hours

Worst moment: Martin Bell announces he will stand against Neil Hamilton, prolonging sleaze debate throughout campaign



Tony Blair: 43

Freshness rating: HHHH

Miles travelled this week: 1,000

Hours spent campaigning on the streets: 1

Interviews: Average 10 per day

Press conferences or rallies: 7

Average working day: 14 hours

Worst moment: Times poll showing massive cut in Labour's lead



Paddy Ashdown: 56

Freshness rating: HH

Miles travelled this week: 3,000

Hours spent campaigning on the streets: 11½

Interviews: Average 16 per day

Press conferences or rallies: 8

Average working day: 18 hours

Worst moment: Admitting last night he was "exhausted after the first week of election campaigning at full tilt"



\* Star rating out of 5 provided by Times correspondents travelling with the leaders

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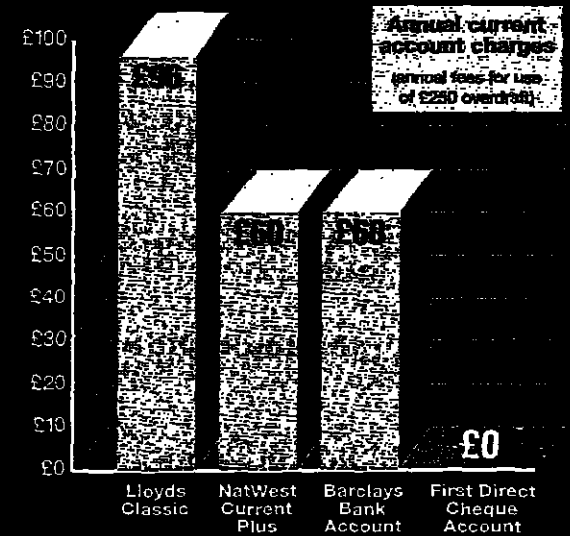
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Celebrity candidates put their star quality to the test in encounters with a critical audience



Sebastian Coe: defending the three-way marginal of Falmouth and Camborne for the Tory party

## Coe's finish leaves heckler speechless

LARRY the taproom comedian chuckled maliciously with his fellow rustics at the bar as he watched the fresh-faced young man with the shandy.

"He'll need something stronger than that when the votes are counted," observed the grizzled Boris Karloff look-alike. "He's out on his earole — next stop the labour exchange."

Blissfully unaware that he was not among friends, Sebastian Coe, the Olympic gold medalist and Tory candidate for Falmouth and Camborne, was speaking of his deep affection for Cornwall. "They called me a carpet-bagger before I won this seat last time, but I think that has been laid to rest," he said happily.

Larry was muttering into his beer about outsiders. "First time I have seen him in a month of Sundays. The least Seb could do is buy us a pint." Sunlight reflected off Mr Coe's shiny new Land Rover in the car park of the New Inn at Mabe, a village on the edge of Falmouth. A party worker wondered if he should stand guard over the vehicle after observing Labour and Lib Dem posters the length of the street opposite.

It is anyone's guess who will win this three-way marginal, where both Labour and the Liberal Democrats claim to be the main challengers to the Tories. Coe's majority of 3,267 in 1992 can give him little cause for complacency.



BILL FROST

The constituency has seen a marked decline in farming and fishing. Male unemployment in some pockets runs at well over 55 per cent. Falmouth's ship-repair yard lost a 1,000 jobs in the early 1980s. Work has picked up but only short-term and casual contracts are on offer.

Beating his brow in a scowl, Larry reminds his mates that he was one of those sacked from the shipyard. With yet another pint on board, he is now ready to ambush the Tory candidate.

Finishing his shandy and leaping to his feet in one lithe movement, Mr Coe strides purposefully from the New Inn.

Larry is not to be cheated of his moment of celebrity. Like the Ancient Mariner, he holds out a gnarled hand to halt his victim in mid-stride. "You

workin' out your notice, are you — thought about what you'll do after the election?" asks Larry, to approving grunts from the assembled company.

He warns to the task of tormenting the candidate with a rambling list of gripes. "Why didn't you lot put the pensions up a bit more? Do you know that over-65s in France and Spain have free holidays? Why did I lose my job in the ship-repair yard? What are we doin' in this bloody Common Market?"

Mr Coe assumes a perma-smile and answers as best he can. On state benefits and free holidays for the elderly he struggles, but Europe is his strong suit. "We've got to be in the EU — jobs rely on our membership. But we must be careful not to accept some of the baggage that goes with it."

Perhaps it is the confident smile, for by now Larry appears deflated. His friends have begun nodding in approval at Mr Coe's performance and the Ancient Mariner has lost face.

The Tory candidate treats the bar to his best smile. Larry, at first speechless, now formally admits defeat and offers his best wishes for the campaign.

"Not such a bad bloke really," he observes once Coe has gone. "Pity he's not from round here though — that would make quite a difference to his chances on May 1."



Glenda Jackson: outshone by screen rival Photograph: Robin Mayes

## Jackson upstaged by Nora Batty

THE Glenda Jackson campaign roadshow rolled into Yorkshire looking for youth votes yesterday. Curiously some party official responsible for planning her national itinerary had decided to send her to Holmfirth, where evergreen septuagenarians frolic in the television series *Last of the Summer Wine*.

Holmfirth, tucked in the foothills of the Pennines, is the sort of place where you have to look very hard for the youth vote. The first stop was billed as a visit to a street stall staffed by young Labour members. The two largely bald men in their late 50s who greeted her might be young by *Last of the Summer Wine* standards but it was pushing credibility a little.

Ms Jackson then set off up and down the cobbled streets worn smooth by pilgrims to Nora Batty's house. She resisted the temptation to knock on the door and ask the real-life occupant if Nora was home. But she did stop by at Sid's cafe, which also features prominently in the programme, and posed for pictures with a model of the woolly-haired Compo.

One is tempted to wonder if Ms Jackson ever gets fed up with landing the show-business slots in Labour's quest for votes. If so, the joy of visiting somewhere like Holmfirth is that there is never any danger of people getting excited about her status as a double Oscar winner. She just cannot compete with her fictional screen rivals.

With still no youths in sight Ms Jackson approached a trio, whose com-



DAMIEN WHITWORTH

bined age must have been at least 180, outside Sid's cafe. Unfortunately, they hadn't come to see her. "We've come to see Nora's house," chattered one lady.

The trio rushed over to pose for snaps with the Compo dummy and were rather bemused to find newspaper photographers ushering the lady in red into the frame as well. "I have to admit I have only ever seen about three episodes of *Last of the Summer Wine*," confessed Ms Jackson. "But I have always thought it was marvellous when I did see it," she added quickly.

She pattered up the narrow streets pushing leaflets through doors. A few people waved from windows but mostly the town slept.

One figure, however, was keeping a close eye on proceedings. "Apparently he's from Special Branch," said Dan Hodges, Ms Jackson's son and press officer. "It's the first time we've seen him and nobody told us he was coming... he just appeared."

Ms Jackson has been busy performing for the party on the national stage this week despite an earlier disagreement with Labour HQ over the amount of time she had to spend away from her constituency. She had rejected the national schedule drawn up for her by party officials and insisted that the majority of her time be spent defending her slender majority of 1,440 in Hampstead and Highgate. But she had led a session of bingo in Birmingham yesterday and been to a dinner in Cardiff.

She declared she was enjoying herself. "It is always very interesting to get out and about and see people. I don't find it is true what you read that people are apathetic about the election."

The hunt for youth was forced to leave Holmfirth and turn to Batley instead. Here nothing had been left to chance as the engagement was at Batley Youth Theatre where teenagers performed a short show called *Vote*, which has been touring the area encouraging peers to do just that. She was clearly well satisfied to have finally found some youths.

"It is particularly interesting that they say that they weren't bothered about politics before they started doing the show but in the course of working on it they had become interested," Ms Jackson said.

Only one person seemed to have been turned off. As she moved on to the next photocall it was noticed that the Special Branch man had gone. Clearly double Oscar winners aren't worth watching all the time.

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When in a hole, keep digging. Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and John Major carving out their careers at the controls of a mechanical digger, MPs' favourite route to the salt of the earth and blue-collar credibility

## If you want to get ahead get a hard hat and dig for victory

FANCY a career in parliament but not sure if you are suited to the cut and thrust of political life? Just answer this simple questionnaire to find out whether you have the makings of a cabinet bigwig:

1. At a general election, a candidate's most powerful tool is (a) a passionate oratory; (b) a mechanical digger; (c) a mechanical digger.
2. The surest way to win voters' support is through building (a) confidence among the electorate; (b) a rapport with your constituency committee; (c) sites.

3. When seeking votes, it is important always to be hard: (a) on your opponent; (b) headed; (c) hatted.
4. You strongly believe that political foundations need: (a) government support; (b) business sponsorship; (c) excavating.

If you answered (c) to all of the above, there is a very strong chance that you could make it all the way to Downing Street. An ambitious politician cannot walk past a JCB digger without climbing into the cabin and yanking the levers. Margaret

Thatcher never missed an opportunity to slap on a hard hat and vault into a cabin. Tony Blair drove around in one last September. On Thursday John Major was in one at the JCB factory in Rugeley, Staffordshire, while Michael Portillo steered one through Colchester. Is this all just coincidence?

"Things like that are not coincidental," insists Cary Cooper, Professor of Organisational Psychology at the University of Manchester's Institute of Science and Technology. "You have to ask



**Joe Joseph excavates the subconscious desire of parliamentary candidates to seize the levers of power and get themselves into a hole**

yourself, why are they setting themselves up in that particular circumstance? Being photographed in a school, or a hospital, you can understand. But why stand next to a digger? On a conscious level, what they think it means is

"I'm a man of the earth, or a woman of the earth. I don't just deal with the senior people. I relate to the common man".

"The subconscious message is twofold. He's saying, one: 'I'm going to create some-

thing'. And two: 'Hey, I'm in the driver's seat. I'm in charge. There isn't room in this cabin for more than one of us'."

Anything else, Prof?

"Actually, yes. What is the top news item at the moment? Sleaze. And what do we say about sleaze? We talk about 'digging the dirt'. Not that they are digging the dirt. But they are symbolising what is going on in the political scene."

Yes, but what's so fascinating about mechanical diggers? Let's ask Malcolm

Dyke, Britain's official Number One JCB fanatic, who has amassed a vast collection of JCB memorabilia, models and company literature.

"I can completely understand politicians' fascination with JCBs," he says. "Every-one would want to drive one. There are 84 in the product range at the moment. It's quite fascinating really. It's a very skilful job. You can't just get into the cab and start fiddling with the controls."

Francis Halliwell of the Quentin Bell Organisation, who advises big cheeses on

their body language, has studied the pictures of MPs on diggers and decided that "the great thing about civil engineering equipment is that it enables politicians to swing wildly from left to right at the drop of a hard hat, while being totally reliant on the advice of others to give directions".

But best of all, you can make a U-turn and cover your tracks so efficiently that no body could possibly detect that your footprints had been anywhere near the scene of the crime.

### Goldsmith wins court victory on broadcasts

By CHARLES BRENNER

THE Referendum Party was delighted by the High Court's decision yesterday to examine its claim that the big parties and broadcasters had deprived it of a fair share of electoral air time.

Party officials said they were pleased with the ruling from Mr Justice Sedley that they were entitled to have the full court investigate their claim that the Independent Television Authority had shown "too ready acceptance" of quotas that had been set by a non-statutory committee of MPs and broadcasters.

Sir James Goldsmith's party, which wants to obtain a referendum on Britain's future in the European Union, is incensed that it had received merely a single five-minute slot on the five main television channels while the Labour and Conservative parties have been given five ten-minute slots on each. The Liberal Democrats have received four ten-minute slots.

The victory, however, was modest because the judge rejected the Referendum Party's claim that the BBC had discriminated against it, and he dictated narrow legal grounds for the new hearing.

### Sinn Fein hopes hit by DUP withdrawal

By NICHOLAS WAIT

SINN FEIN'S hopes of winning four seats in the election suffered a severe setback yesterday when the Rev Ian Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, withdrew his party's candidates from two marginal seats.

To avoid splitting the unionist vote, he said the DUP would give the Ulster Unionists a free run against Sinn Fein and the SDLP in North Belfast and West Tyrone.

The move means that Cecil Walker, Ulster Unionist MP for Belfast North since 1983, is virtually certain to win. Willie Thompson of the UUP, stands a strong chance of winning the new seat of West Tyrone as the combined 34 per cent Unionist vote is higher than the 28 per cent won by the SDLP and Sinn Fein at last May's forum election.

David Amess

David Amess, Conservative candidate for Southend West, asks us to make clear that in saying (report, April 10) that Southend was "a civilised area with traditions", he was not implying that his old seat, Basildon, was not.

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Alexandra Frean on efforts to win over the voters who could swing several results

## Parties break new ground with TV appeal to Asians

TELEVISION history will be made next week when the main parties screen the first election broadcasts aimed specifically at voters of Asian origin.

The broadcasts, which will be transmitted on the influential Asian satellite and cable television station Zee TV, are aimed at voters in the 36 constituencies where pollsters predict that the Asian vote could significantly affect the result.

Leaders of the three main parties and of the Scottish National Party and the Referendum Party have also agreed to be interviewed individually by the channel.

Although the Asian community has traditionally been solidly pro-Labour by a ratio of seven to three, a recent poll by MORI suggests the emergence of a greater number of floating voters. Anita Anand, head of news at Zee TV, said: "The fact that the parties are doing these party election broadcasts and interviews

shows that they have realised that it is simply no longer enough for politicians to go into a temple or a mosque and get garlanded. That is an empty gesture — as bad as kissing babies."

All three main parties have used endorsements from successful Asian businessmen in their election broadcasts.

By far the slickest production is from the Labour Party. It includes a contribution from Lord Paul, the Labour life peer who has built up the Caparo steel business in 31 years from a tiny operation funded by a £5,000 loan to an empire worth an estimated £500 million. He says: "The new Labour Party is a new political party which is catering to all sections of society. That's what we need in this society."

Ali Amin, the restaurateur whose eating establishments include the fashionable Red Fort in central London, also appears in the Labour broadcast. Although it is in English,

it ends with Labour Party slogans read out in Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, Punjabi and Bengali. Ms Anand said that she had advised the parties to make their broadcasts in Hindi, the most widely understood language of the Asian community, but none had done so.

The Conservative broadcast features an address to voters from Lord Bagri, who rose from being a clerk in a Calcutta metals business to become the first non-white chairman of the London Metal Exchange. His family fortune is worth some £80 million. Seated in front of a portrait of John Major, Lord Bagri delivers his speech in a very "high" version of Hindi. The broadcast is interspersed with extracts from Mr Major's address to the Commonwealth Institute in January.

The Liberal Democrats' election broadcast features an endorsement from Ramesh Dewan, a publishing and property tycoon, friend of Paddy Ashdown and chairman of the Liberal Democrats' Ethnic Minorities Group.

The Scottish National Party broadcast, shot in the style of a pop video with fast edits and a shaky hand-held camera, is largely in Urdu and appears to be aimed at people from Pakistan and Kashmir living in the Glasgow Shetland constituency, where the party is fielding its only candidate of Asian origin.

Ms Anand said that the Asian community could have a disproportionate influence on voting results because of where it lived. "Our doubt does not come from our numbers, but from our concentration in specific areas."

Asian voters represent 36.1 per cent of the electorate in Ealing Southall (west London), 31.7 per cent in Birmingham Ladywood and in Birmingham Sparkbrook and Small Heath, 30.9 per cent in East Ham (east London), 26.7 per cent in Bradford West, 26.4 per cent in Bethnal Green and Bow (east London), and 23.8 per cent in Leicester.



Above, the team who made the SNP election broadcast; below, Dr. Sheila Cheeroth, a GP, in the Labour broadcast. Lord Bagri for the Conservatives, and Anjan Gupta, a businessman, in the Lib Dem broadcast



## Labour risks losing its grip on an upwardly mobile minority

RESEARCH suggests that British Asians, who contribute £5 billion to the economy each year, are shifting their allegiance from Labour as their prosperity grows (Adrian Lee writes).

Nevertheless, seven out of ten voters of Asian origin still said in a MORI poll that they would vote Labour.

There has been a significant increase in the number of parliamentary candidates of Asian origin. More than 40 are expected to stand and, so far, the Liberal Democrats

have the largest number. In some inner-city constituencies, Asians comprise 30 per cent of the electorate and their turnout is usually as high as 80 per cent.

But analysts have also noticed dissatisfaction among young, third-generation Britons from Asian families who feel disenfranchised. Like many young black people, they reject the British political system as racist and will not vote.

Dr Peter Patel, of Birmingham, has set up the

Fourth Party, which plans to field up to four candidates in the Midlands, campaigning for better representation for Asians in Parliament.

There are 36 constituencies where the number of voters from the Asian community is higher than the majority secured by the winning party at the last general election. The so-called West Midlands corridor has the largest concentration of Asian voters and marginal constituencies, and will be a key region, as will Yorkshire.

## Rivals unite against racists

By Shirley English

POLITICAL rivals in the Glasgow seat of Govan put party differences aside yesterday in an attempt to drive the British National Party out of the constituency.

Labour, the Scottish National Party, the Scottish Socialist Alliance and trade union leaders united to condemn BNP plans to field Jim White, originally from Ayrshire, at the election.

Labour and the SNP are locked in a fierce battle for the seat. In 1992 the SNP won 37 per cent of the vote, against Labour's 49 per cent. This time the SNP hopes to capitalise on local Labour splits.

Yesterday, however, the rivals rose above party politics. They agreed that it was no accident that the BNP was targeting Govan, which, if Labour wins, will return Britain's first millionaire Muslim MP, Mohammed Sarwar. About 10 per cent of the voters are Asian, mainly Muslims, with a large number of Sikhs. The BNP advocates forced repatriation of "immigrants".

The three parties pledged not to share any platform with the BNP candidate, and said the organisation should not be treated as a legitimate party. They also said they would support any action by postal workers who refused to handle BNP leaflets in the area, and called on the media not to give the party a platform.

Nicola Sturgeon, for the SNP, and Alan McCombes, for the SSA, both said they did not want votes from anyone who objected to Labour's candidate on racial grounds.

## Major defied on immigration

A Tory candidate defied the party leadership yesterday by including in his manifesto his opposition to any relaxation in immigration laws.

Voters in Wolverhampton South West will receive leaflets from Nicholas Budgen in which he states that immigration has changed whole communities and created "substantial social problems". John Major has said he does not want race to become an election issue.

### THE ASIAN VOTE

CONSTITUENCY	Swing/party %	% Asian voters
Batley and Spen (Con)	Lab 0.8	7.6
Bethnal Green & Bow (Lab)	L Dem 13.9	26.4
Birmingham Ladywood (Lab)	Con 25.5	31.7
Birmingham Selly Oak (Lab)	Con 12.2	5.6
Birmingham Sparkbrook & Small Heath (Lab)	Con 18.7	31.7
Birmingham Yardley (Lab)	Con 0.2	3.1
Blackburn (Lab)	Con 5.5	14.6
Bradford North (Lab)	Con 7.8	14.7
Bradford West (Lab)	Con 9.7	28.7
Brant North (Con)	Lab 13.6	23.7
Brent South (Lab)	Con 13.3	20.9
Brentford & Isleworth (Con)	Lab 1.4	9.7
Croydon North (Con)	Lab 0.1	13.3
Derby South (Lab)	Con 3.7	12.6
Dudley North (Lab)	Con 0.95	4.2
Ealing Southall (Lab)	Con 4.5	36.1
East Ham (Lab)	Con 11	30.9
Edmonton (Con)	Lab 0.8	4.45
Falham & Heston (Lab)	Con 1.3	21.6
Glasgow Govan (Lab)	SNP 7.7	10.98
Hatfield (Lab)	Con 0.4	5
Harrow East (Con)	Lab 9.6	19.1
Hayes & Harlington (Con)	Lab 0.1	13.6
Ilford South (Con)	Lab 2.4	23
Leicester East (Lab)	Con 11.9	31.5
Leicester South (Lab)	Con 8.8	23.8
Luton South (Con)	Lab 0.5	18.5
Milchem & Morden (Con)	Lab 1.7	5.3
Oldham East & Saddleworth (Con)	L Dem 0.5	3.2
Pendle (Lab)	Con 2.0	7.1
Rochdale (Lib Dem)	Lab 0.1	10.7
Slough (Lab)	Con 0.0	18.7
Walsall South (Lab)	Con 3.2	14.3
Warrley (Lab)	Con 8.4	15.9
West Ham (Lab)	Con 14	20.20
Wolverhampton South West (Con)	Lab 4.7	13.4

Information supplied by Zee TV

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CHANGING TIMES



هنا من الاخبار

Rivals  
unite  
against  
racists

## Blair's trust lies mainly in quality of his own choice

TONY BLAIR may be about to secure sweeping victory at the polls, but while he trusts, just to democracy to deliver the right result across the country he does not within the Labour Party.

In order to secure quality candidates who can cope adequately with ministerial responsibilities, the Labour leadership has had to bypass the usual selection process by creating new pocket boroughs. Old, in every sense, Labour MPs are having their mouths stuffed with ermine in order to make way for figures handpicked for high office.

The process of evicting oldtimers and installing new boys and girls has been masterminded by Sally Morgan, an aide in Tony Blair's office with responsibility for party relations. Ms Morgan, a former Labour Students organiser and one time head of campaigns at Labour headquarters, has herself been linked with the Tooting seat held by Tom Cox, 67.

Already the Tory defector Alan Howarth, and Yvette Cooper, a former Independent leader, have been secured the seats necessary to smooth their way into ministries. One other possible beneficiary is the radical barrister and broadcaster Helena Kennedy. Ms Kennedy, according to Millbank fixers, has been mentioned in connection with Dudley North where John Gilbert is retiring. The Labour leadership, apparently anxious at the dearth of legal talent in their parliamentary ranks, need to make a successful professional lawyer Attorney-General.

The Labour leadership, however, like O.J. Simpson, needs more than just one good lawyer. The Blairites want a whole "dream team" of outside talent parachuted in to take on jobs which MPs of the old intake are insufficiently able for ideological, to cope with.

One Labour strategist said before recent resignations: "There could be a real problem in government finding enough good people to do the jobs. Look at the front bench outside the Shadow Cabinet, how many of them are effective? There are so few signed up to the project that we are debating whether they should be concentrated in new Labour priority areas like Health, Social Security and Education or areas where they will have to be good to hold their own with outsiders, like the DTI and Foreign Office."

There is another reason for putting old workhorses out to pasture in the Lords. As one Labour candidate said: "What we want are dependable lobby fodder." Although Labour will require talented frontbenchers



Michael Gove on how Labour is conducting its search for enough "suitable" people to form a credible government front bench

in the Lords, what the elevation of former MPs will provide are whipable souls with no commitments on the South Bank Show.

Labour may yet need many more biddable backbenchers in the Upper House. There is a convention, established in the Forties, that the Lords does not frustrate a Government's manifesto commitments. Yesterday, however, Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, raised the possibility of the Tory majority in the House of Lords sabotaging Labour's constitutional legislation. He was hoping to head off Labour's plans to restrict the time devoted to debating devolution on the floor of the House of Commons. Labour may have to create, or at the very least threaten, a new red army on the red benches if it is to get its Bills through.

Since the election was called, seven Labour veterans have announced that they are standing down and one party insider hinted others would pick up their carriage clocks this weekend. One of those tipped to retire is Tom Pendry, who has represented Stalybridge and Hyde since 1970 and is a friend of Mr Blair. Another is the 73-year-old member for Ashton-under-Lyne, Robert Sheldon.

Some of those MPs who have retired, such as the former Cumbernauld member Norman Hogg, have already been replaced. The shortlist from which Mr Hogg's successor was chosen was drawn up, because of the proximity of the election, by the party's National Executive Committee rather than the constituency party.

Shortlists allow the activists a choice and new Labour strategists never like leaving anything to chance. That is why there has been a spate of eleventh-hour resignations. Former MPs who announce their retirement after the posters have been printed may annoy local activists, but they turn their seats into Mr Blair's property. With a few short days to go before nominations close on the 16th, the party leadership has the power to impose the candidate.

An impeccably Blairite union figure like Alan Johnson, of the UCU, may be able to secure selection, but he is the exception that proves the rule. The failure of Jack Dromey, Harriet Harman's husband and a Transport Union official, to be shortlisted in Pontefract is a surer indication of Mr Blair's plans for the unions: the carthorses will be taken to the knacker's yard.

One Blairite candidate believes that the most significant proof of Labour's intention to move away from the unions is not yesterday's business manifesto but a document called *Party into Power*. He said: "It was written by Sally Morgan for the NEC. It is intended to prepare the way for the removal of union seats on the NEC and the ending of union sponsorship."

Labour, it is claimed, could survive financially with state funding and support from businesses which prefer Labour's more pro-European position. Whether it can survive politically cut off from its roots is a different matter.



Ken Livingstone enjoying the campaign yesterday in Brent East, where he invited members of the public to barrack the man from *The Times*

## Livingstone lets fly from behind his iron curtain

Michael Evans in the front line of a cold war waged by new Labour's latest recruit

KEN LIVINGSTONE was in mischievous mood yesterday, extolling the virtues of new Labour by megaphone and telling the electorate in his Brent East campaign constituency that Tony Blair would make "the finest Labour prime minister since Clement Attlee". Mr Livingstone, regarded as unreconstructed old Labour, is keeping quiet about his real feelings on how the Labour Party has changed under its new leader. Yesterday, to prove his pedigree as a loyal campaigner, he was busy distributing leaflets that promised "new Labour, new Britain".

In anticipation, however, that members of the press might try to use his campaign words to impede the Blair revivalist bandwagon, he has imposed an "iron curtain" (his words) around the constituency to try to freeze out reporters seeking interviews. On the telephone in his campaign office, the dilapidated London Apollo Club in Willesden, northwest London, he insisted that he would say nothing until May 2.

However, when *The Times* caught up with him yesterday as he canvassed in Carlton ward — a run-down, crime ridden area largely populated by council tenants — the loquacious Mr Livingstone could not help reverting to his more traditional knockabout comedy act.

He used megaphone diplomacy to invite the locals to come and have a go at the representative from *The Times*. "Now is your chance to come down and beat up a stooge from the capitalist Murdoch press," he declared, informing a largely absent audience that all *Times* reporters were paid £60,000 a year. No one took him up on the offer, which he described as a legitimate blood sport.

Despite his polite refusal to talk to the press during the election

campaign, he was soon affably chatting about doorstep responses he had been getting, including one from a Tory voter. "He said he couldn't vote for someone like me but he just wanted to get rid of the Tory Government."

Back on the megaphone, Mr Livingstone told anyone who cared to listen that it was time for the Tories to go; they had been caught with their hands in the till. A lone voice from an office block shouted: "Shut up."

An elderly woman who had recently been mugged told Mr Livingstone that she would not vote for him or any of the candidates because no one had cared when she had been assaulted. Mr Livingstone, who is nurturing a majority of just under 6,000, took the opportunity to tell her what Mr Blair would do.

Mr Livingstone suggested that *The Times* interview two of his rivals. He said: "Go and see Stan Keable. [from Arthur Scargill's party]. He wants world revolution today. Or the Tory candidate, he's an arms dealer." The latter, Mark Francois, a Basildon man, said that he was a defence adviser, not an arms exporter.

In one of his campaign leaflets, Mr Francois, 31, lists five issues on which he and Mr Livingstone are at opposite ends of the political spectrum. Mr Francois wants a constitutional monarchy and the survival of the pound. Mr Livingstone, he says, wants a republic and a European single currency.

He said: "Mr Livingstone and I are like chalk and cheese but we've had good public debates together on the main issues. The trouble is, he is handing out leaflets promoting new Labour but in the debates he goes on about all the old Labour stuff."



Cooper, above, selected, and Kennedy, a possible Attorney-General



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# Yogic flyers reach new height of political ambition

THREE intensely serious men in suits yesterday laid out an electoral platform calling for the establishment of an army of 7,000 "Yogic Flyers" who, by bouncing up and down on their bottoms and practising transcendental meditation for 20 minutes twice daily, would "create a happy, prosperous, problem-free nation".



Only one party is offering the voters "bubbling bliss". Ben Macintyre meditates on its manifesto, and concludes that it is the same old pie in the sky

The launch of the Natural Law Party manifesto marks a critical moment in the campaign, setting a standard against which all other electoral gobbledygook can be measured. The party's manifesto is the most ambitious on offer, being nothing less than a "blueprint to create heaven on earth".

The party is fielding 300 candidates, an advertising blitz similar to its £2 million campaign at the last election is about to get underway, and George Harrison, former Beatle and the most prominent backer of the party, remains firm in his support, we were assured.

The 120-page manifesto, presented by Party leader Geoffrey Clements in the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in London yesterday, is a complex,

heavily adjectival document with lots of diagrams, but broadly it goes like this: "Natural Law is the intelligence and infinite organising power that silently maintains and guides the evolution of everything in the universe." In other words, a sort of cosmic Peter Mandelson.

The key to unlocking this law, and thus eliminating the "stress, frustration, sickness, crime, violence and all other forms of negativity that beset society", is transcendental meditation and yogic flying.

Dr Clements flatly refused to fly for the cameras, while promising a demonstration at a later date. But judging from the illustrations, you

cross your legs in the yoga position and then bounce, attaining an altitude of up to three feet, which must be murder on the coccyx but

apparently produces a sensation of "bubbling bliss".

A team of 7,000 yogic flyers taking off twice a day would, it is promised, provide enough bubbly for all the rest of us. This would somehow spread Natural Law through the national consciousness, ending world conflict and making it easier for everyone to get up in the morning. All those in power should take it up and make "brain-functioning more efficient", Dr Clements, who has a PhD in physics, said.

"Even the Queen?" we asked. Dr Clements was firm: "Anyone who takes a position of responsibility."

The wackiest aspect of the Natural Law Party is their studied unwackiness. They are trying so hard to be natural it is frightening. The three senior party officials

have the air of introverted and faintly undernourished chartered accountants.

Deferentially, sombrely, Dr Clements laid out the figures. The number of yogic flyers required for a given number of people is the square root of one per cent of that number. Four thousand scientific studies prove this, he said. Thus Britain could get by with a mere 800 aficionados, but since this is an international effort, the party has arrived at the figure 7,000, that being the square root of one per cent of the entire world population.

Why, the press asked, if the Maharishi Effect happens anyway, doesn't the party use the funds it will waste on this election to rent a big field, bring together all the yogic high-flyers and just get on with it? Dr Clements said this objection was "superficial".

I reeled out of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors feeling as I always do after a session with the accountant: confused, obscurely guilty and glad to be leaving all that to someone else.

After seeing genuine conviction close up, false or merely convenient professions of belief that are the



The bottom line: Dr Geoffrey Clements and his party's manifesto — a "blueprint to create heaven on earth"

true currency of by real politicians seemed a blessed relief. Give me a lying spin-doctor, an evaded question, some fake earnestness, a healthy cynic.

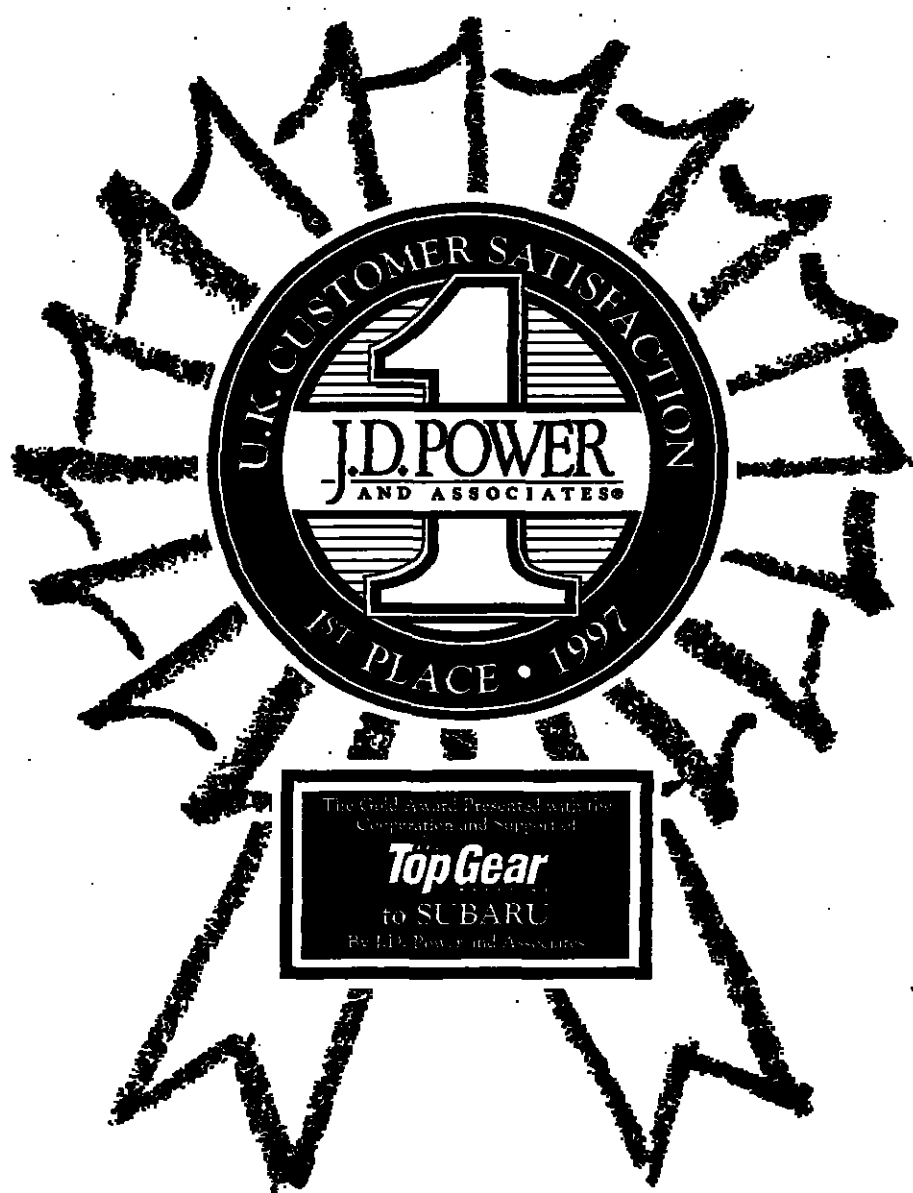
But it was good to see the Natural Lawyers again, a sign that the waves are washing as normal on the wilder shores of our democracy, that the constellation remains un-

changed in the outer galaxies beyond our ken.

Like Hale-Bopp, the Natural Law Party will streak across the election firmament at precisely the expected time

and place and then disappear from sight for another election cycle, leaving behind a long tail of lost deposits that will be visible from other planets.

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## Greens persevere with lofty ideas

By ALAN HAMILTON

LAST month the Green Party launched its election manifesto, but nobody took a blind bit of notice. They had another go yesterday; attendance was still thin, but was boosted by Jake the black Labrador, which roamed the conference room alertly until they began talking about proportional representation, when it fell asleep.

The Greens are the party of world order and loft insulation. This means withdrawing from Europe, banning factory farming, reducing traffic, banning all nuclear technology, writing off Third World debt and lots more glass fibre matting in the attic.

A future ideal green world would include the replacement of employers' national insurance contributions by taxes on pollution, a 10 per cent reduction in road traffic by 2010 and a Bill of Rights establishing in law the individual rights of citizenship.

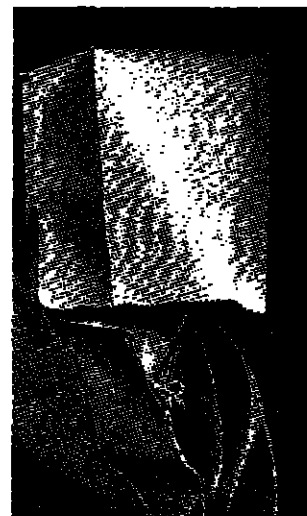
Green policy in many areas is vague, more eau-de-nil than emerald, but on the loft issue it is precise. The Greens want a reduction in the VAT rate on



energy-saving materials such as loft insulation to 8 per cent.

One problem with the Green Party these days is that it lacks familiar faces. It was suggested by mischievous reporters yesterday that they could do worse than adopt Swampy, at present deeply entrenched at Manchester airport. Swampy, they retorted, did not qualify because he was not a Green Party member.

The other trouble with Swampy is that, as he lives in a hole in the ground, he has a less than consuming interest in loft insulation.



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See p.28 Weekend

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# Germans neglected British tip-off on Iran killers

FROM ROGER BOYES  
IN BERLIN

THE British Secret Service tipped off German police about the suspicious activities of an Iranian assassin shortly before his hit team attacked and killed Kurdish dissident leaders in a Berlin restaurant. Had the German authorities acted on the information, it might have been possible to prevent the murders — and to keep alive relations with the Iranian regime.

Instead, Thursday's jailing of four members of an Iranian murder squad — including the agent,

Kazem Darabi, 38 — seems to have torpedoed Europe's policy of "critical dialogue" with the Tehran Government. The British connection emerged yesterday as lawyers began to speak for the first time in the 3½-year case.

"It is clear that the British were keeping track on people like Darabi, who have been posing as businessmen," said a German lawyer in Berlin. "What is less clear is why the Germans did not act promptly enough." The Kurds were killed on September 17, 1992, during a Socialist International session in Berlin. Darabi — who

had been suspected of acting against Iranian émigrés before — had drifted in and out of the sights of German counter-intelligence. In the autumn of 1992 he appears not to have been under surveillance. The police blunder is only one of several puzzling aspects of the case: who, for example, betrayed the Kurds as they sat down to dinner?

The hit team, equipped by Darabi, received a telephone call from someone close to the murdered Kurdish leader, Sadegh Sharafkandi, shortly before they left for the restaurant. This Iranian spy has never been tracked down

and his presence still breathes suspicion among exiled Iranians. The principal killer was identified by the court on Thursday as an Iranian called "Sharif". He disappeared soon after the killing, flew to Turkey and then on to Iran where, according to German intelligence, he was awarded a Mercedes 250 limousine for his services.

Perhaps to make up for leaving so many loose ends, German intelligence has launched a huge operation against Iran. According to *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* — well informed on Iranian affairs

— Germany has embarked on one of the biggest telephone-bugging operations since the Cold War. All telephone communications between Germany and the Islamic Republic of Iran have been monitored since November, as have telephone conversations by suspect Iranians and their sympathisers within Germany. All fax, telephone and telex communications from the Iranian Embassy have been tapped.

The German intelligence service has, however, been having problems transcribing and evaluating the tapes because of a shortage of

Farsi speakers. Diplomatic sources say Israeli intelligence experts have been helping the Germans, especially with the breaking of codes. The failure to act on the British tip in 1992 is being blamed on the Berlin branch of the German counter-intelligence agency. Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, tried yesterday to calm down the irritated atmosphere between Iran and Germany. "It is a very emotional situation and my job is to contribute to calm, and not to unrest."

The massive monitoring of communications with Iran is in vivid

contrast to the red-carpet treatment given by the Germans to Ali Fallahian, the Iranian intelligence Minister, when he visited intelligence and counter-intelligence headquarters in Munich and Cologne as recently as 1993.

The trial documents make quite plain that the Iranian hit team would never have been successfully prosecuted without the work of German intelligence. The most influential witness for the prosecution was an Iranian secret police defector, identified only as Witness C, who laid bare the workings of the Iranian assassination squads.

## Rafsanjani says storm with Europe will pass

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

PRESIDENT Rafsanjani of Iran yesterday denounced a Berlin court's verdict that Iranian leaders had ordered political murders in Germany, but dismissed a diplomatic row with Europe as a "passing storm" provoked by the United States and Israel.

He said Germany's economic interests could suffer as a result, but there were no specific threats of retaliation in his address to thousands of worshippers at Friday prayers.

"The Germans broke the hearts of millions of Iranians with this verdict and they are going to suffer for it," President Rafsanjani said. "I am not saying they will lose everything they have here, but their position here will definitely be weakened." He described the "politically motivated" trial as the "most scandalous event in Western history".

After prayers, several hun-

dred members of Ansar-e-Hizbullah, street bullies mostly employed to ensure people dress and behave modestly, protested outside the German Embassy in the capital, stopping on their way to chant "Death to Rushdie" outside the British Embassy. The mob pelted the German mission with tomatoes, but an attempt to storm the building was repelled by riot police.

As senior European diplomats, including Britain's Chargé d'Affaires, Jeffrey James, prepared to fly home for consultations, Hojatollah Rafsanjani scornfully recalled a diplomatic exodus in 1989. "Was it not so in the Salman Rushdie affair that all of them recalled their ambassadors and later disgracefully sent them back with apologies?" he said.

The uproar after a ruling on Thursday in Germany that Iran's political leadership had ordered the murder of four Iranian Kurdish dissidents in

1992 would soon subside, President Rafsanjani said. "They [America and Israel] needed such a propaganda wave. We should expect them to keep up the noise in the West. But this will bring them nothing. It is like a thunderstorm that brings clear weather in its wake."

Privately, however, Iranian Foreign Ministry officials expressed dismay at the rupture in relations with Europe, which the Government has courted as a desperately needed counterweight against US attempts to isolate Iran.

There has been no reaction so far from the holy city of Qom, where hardline mullahs last November hinted that the German prosecutor could face a fatwa similar to the one imposed on Mr Rushdie, the writer. Many Iranian businessmen also hope Iran's regime will swallow its pride and do nothing more to antagonise Germany, Iran's main trading partner.



Iranian protesters with a poster of the late Ayatollah Khomeini converge on the Germany Embassy in Tehran yesterday after Friday prayers

## Parents of disabled 'impure', says bishop

FROM RICHARD OWEN  
IN ROME

GROUPS representing mentally and physically handicapped people were furious yesterday over an assertion by Bishop Javier Echevarria, head of Opus Dei, the influential Catholic organisation, that most disabled people are offspring of "impure parents" who had had sexual relations before marriage. At a meeting

in Sicily of 1,500 Opus Dei followers, Bishop Echevarria was quoted as saying that "according to scientific research" 90 per cent of handicapped people had been born to parents who had "not entered into marriage in a pure state". Opus Dei sources said the bishop thought he was at a closed meeting, but the *Giornale di Sicilia* newspaper reported his remarks.

Opus Dei, regarded with

suspicion by liberal Catholics as a powerful, even sinister, right-wing organisation, has the support of the Pope, who beatified Josemaria Escrivá de Balaguer, its founder, in 1992, despite critics saying that Escrivá had not led the necessary "exemplary life".

Opus Dei officials said that Mgr Echevarria, who is Spanish, had been referring "not to handicapped people in the broad sense" but to AIDS and

"HIV-infected children born to HIV-infected parents". There may have been "misunderstandings" over his remarks, during an address on the need for purity in marriage, because of his "poor Italian", officials said.

The Italian Down's Syndrome Association expressed "horror and unease", and called on the bishop to apologise "to the handicapped and to those who care for them".



Cardin: restaurant owner

## Maxim's turns into wine seller

FROM ADAM SAGE  
IN PARIS

MAXIM'S, the Paris restaurant, is planning to sell 8,000 "exceptional" bottles of wine in the biggest auction of its kind held in France.

Pierre Cardin, the fashion designer who owns Maxim's, is likely to make several million francs from the auction. He has decided to market some of the most prestigious bottles from the restaurant's

100,000-strong cellar, including "mythical" wines such as Latite, Haut-Brion, Margaux and Mouton-Rothschild.

With experts telling M Cardin that it will take 40 years for diners to drink all the bottles owned by the restaurant, he has "decided to put a selection at the disposition of the public". Some of the bottles, such as a 1945 Mouton-Rothschild, are expected to fetch Fr30,000 to Fr40,000 (£3,200 to £4,200) each.

Maitre Jacques Tajan, the auctioneer in charge of the sale, said: "All the wines are prestigious and they have also been well conserved. I am extremely demanding." He said he hoped to better the Fr33 million record for a French wine sale.

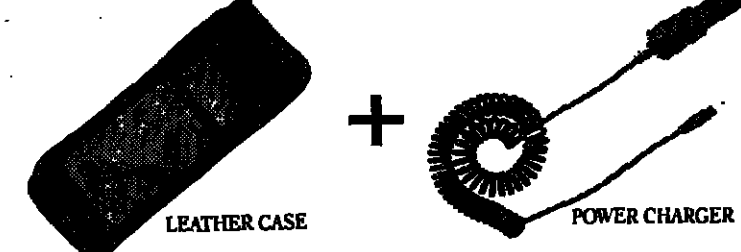
The auction comes at a time when Maxim's is struggling to live up to an illustrious past, with food critics attacking its menu and some clients angered by recent changes.

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# Censorship fear as China adviser joins Hong Kong paper

FROM CATHERINE FIELD IN HONG KONG

STAFF on Hong Kong's flagship English-language daily say they are afraid that a censor is being employed who will vet any copy for unfavourable references towards China, which takes over the colony in 80 days.

Feng Xi Liang, 75, founder editor of the *China Daily*, a Communist Party mouthpiece, will take up a job as China consultant at the *South China Morning Post* next week, Jonathan Fenby, editor of the *Post*, announced.

Mr Feng's most recent job was consultant to *Windows* magazine, a Hong Kong publication which is considered so patriotically correct that it was distributed to passengers flying China's national airline.

"It is absolutely clear that he will be a quasi-political commissar," a senior *Post* reporter said. "What really worries me is reporters will start changing the slant or toning down a story just so they can be sure it gets into the paper." Another said: "This is just the start, it is very sinister."

Staff at the paper have not been told officially of Mr

Feng's future role at the paper but have watched with concern as workmen have built him an office alongside that of the editor, Mr Fenby, a former editor of *The Observer* in London, declined to spell out what Mr Feng's role would be, citing commercial secrecy.

"Feng is a consultant to the newspaper and a consultant is a consultant. He is having an office next to mine because it is the only office space available. People can read anything they like into anything. But I am the editor."

Mr Feng's appointment comes amid concerns from Hong Kong's pro-democracy faction that the *Post* is shying away from extensive coverage of the territory's political issues and is beating a "patriotic" drum to sidestep any problems with China after the July 1 handover.

Last June, the *Post* appointed Sir Percy Cradock, a former British Ambassador to Beijing and a supporter of a depoliticised Hong Kong, to its editorial board. In October, the paper devoted its entire front page to a single photograph of

activists planting Chinese and Taiwanese flags on one of the disputed Diaoyutai islands during protests against Japanese ownership of the islands. "Mission accomplished," declared the *Post* headline.

Emily Lau, a pro-democracy legislator and former journalist, said: "I am not surprised by Feng's appointment. They have the best of both worlds now, Sir Percy Cradock and Feng Xi Liang. This is very disturbing but not so unexpected. I think now I will just call it the *New China Post*." Fears of pro-Beijing bias at the *Post* emerged in 1993, when the paper was bought by Robert Kuok, a Malaysian-born Chinese.

Daisy Li, a journalist on the independent Chinese-language daily *Ming Pao*, said last night: "The problem of censorship does exist in Hong Kong and it is getting worse."

"The trouble is, it is more and more difficult to identify. What you need to do is look at a particular publication on a certain topic, compare it to earlier coverage, and you will notice the tone is softened."

## Tears for last day of colony's naval base

FROM REUTERS IN HONG KONG

TEARS flowed and eight bells tolled at a farewell for the Royal Navy in Hong Kong yesterday as Britain shut its *HMS Tamar* naval base in an end-of-empire retreat leading to the colony's return to China on July 1.

Admiral Sir Jock Slater, the First Sea Lord, Chris Patten, the Governor, and others spoke of dignity and pride as the White Ensign was lowered, furled and folded at the base on Stonecutters Island in Hong Kong harbour.

"The White Ensign has just been lowered over this shore base, but the values that it has stood for will, I hope, remain in this place: respect for law and for person, trust, duty and service," Mr Patten said. "But there is no cause for thinking sad thoughts, that there is dishonour in these endings. Nothing has melted away. There have been no defeats."

In a ceremony that drew tears from old-timers saddened by the decommissioning of Britain's last naval base east of Suez, more than 200 seamen in white uniforms marched through the gates to the upbeat rhythm of the Royal Marines' brass band.

*HMS Tamar* shut down 100 years to the day that a vessel of the same name first arrived in Hong Kong waters. Its closure ended a 156-year association between the Royal Navy and Hong Kong.

The first naval officer to set foot in Hong Kong was probably Sir Edward Belcher, who landed on January 25, 1841, and drank to Queen Victoria's health on Possession Mount. The Union flag was raised the following day.

China, whose navy will occupy another site on Stonecutters Island, was not represented at the ceremony.

□ Singapore: Britain and Singapore signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at improving co-operation between their two navies. The pact will increase training exchanges, joint exercises and personnel visits. (Reuters)



The Royal Navy's White Ensign is folded for the final time at *HMS Tamar* in Hong Kong. Below, Chris Patten, the Governor, chats with men from the base



## US attacks China over arms sales

Washington: America has accused China of violating arms proliferation pacts by selling components for chemical weapons to Iran and continuing to aid Pakistan's nuclear programme (Tom Rhodes writes).

Robert Einhorn, a senior State Department official, prompting immediate demands in Congress for tougher economic sanctions against Beijing, testified before the Senate that China had deliberately ignored protests from the Clinton Administration in its sales to "rogue" states. He said that Beijing was the leading supplier of conventional weapons to Iran.

## Angola hope

Johannesburg: After more than two years' fragile peace and several postponements, Angola's ruling left-wing MPLA and UNITA rebel movement came together at a glimmering ceremony in Luanda, the capital, to form a power-sharing government that many hope will close the book on Africa's longest civil war (Inigo Gilmore writes).

But the non-attendance of Jonas Savimbi, 62, the UNITA leader, highlighted lingering mistrust between the sides.

## Zaire warning

Johannesburg: Laurent Kabila, the Zairean rebel leader, urged foreigners to leave Kinshasa, the capital before a planned assault by his forces (Inigo Gilmore writes). Speaking on rebel radio, he again called on President Mobutu to step down. "If he does not use this last chance, the fighting will go on and will only end in the capture of Kinshasa."

## Spin doctrine

Lagos: The winners of local elections in several wards in Abuja, the Nigerian capital, were decided by the toss of a coin under rules drawn up by the military regime, poll officials admitted. (AFP)

## North Korea 'remains threat'

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO



Shalikashvili: "need to stay watchful"

NORTH KOREA'S military still poses a potent threat to the South despite reports of economic collapse and imminent famine, General John Shalikashvili, the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, said yesterday.

"We need to stay ready and watchful," he told reporters in Tokyo, urging US military forces in the region to remain vigilant. A winter training exercise, which had just ended, had shown the North's economic woes had not diminished its war capability, he said. According to

international aid agencies, North Korea is on the brink of famine and catastrophe. While America has promised to step up relief efforts, South Korea is reluctant to provide aid, fearing it could be diverted to North Korea's armed forces.

William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary, ending a visit to Seoul, said he doubted whether the international community would offer large-scale food aid as long as the North's forces were maintained at a level that threatened the South.

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## Four commanders purged in Yeltsin bribes crackdown

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

PRESIDENT YELTSIN yesterday made good on his pledge to crack down on corruption in Russia, when he dismissed four of the country's top military officers, accused of abusing their ranks.

The Kremlin confirmed that the Russian leader had signed a decree sacking General Vladimir Semionov, the commander of land forces, General Anton Terentev, his deputy in charge of training, Admiral Igor Khmelinov, the Navy's Chief of Staff, and Vice-Admiral Vyacheslav Khramikov, the commander of the Northern Fleet.

All four men have been accused of corruption and are under investigation by the chief military prosecutor's office, which said last month that it was looking into allegations involving 100 senior officers, including 20 generals.

General Semionov, a former Soviet Deputy Defence Minister, had been expecting his dismissal for months. In December, Igor Rodionov, the Defence Minister, accused him publicly of corrupt practices. It was alleged that his wife was involved in suspect arms deals and that he had illegally bought his Defence Ministry dacha, as well as a mansion on land belonging to a military hospital, for a fraction of the market price.

Admiral Khmelinov, the second ranking officer in the Navy, has been under investigation for allegedly receiving millions of dollars for the sale of 64 decommissioned war-

ships. The proceeds were supposed to be spent on the construction of new housing for naval officers serving in the Pacific Fleet, where some apartments were built for the admiral's family and friends.

Yesterday's sackings may be the start of a broader purge of the officer corps by the Kremlin, which plans to reduce sharply the top-heavy military as part of its planned reforms. They also serve to reinforce Mr Yeltsin's pledge made on Thursday that he is serious about cracking down on rampant official corruption, which is endemic in the demoralised armed forces.

With wages often delayed for months, servicemen of all ranks have been involved in the illicit sale of military equipment and property in an effort to survive. While acknowledging that the public



Semionov: rumours of suspect arms deals

has "its doubts" about the Kremlin's attempts to root out age-old corrupt practices in Russia, President Yeltsin nevertheless pledged that he would make the battle against graft a cornerstone of his final three years in office.

"I am determined, I have the political will and I have your backing in this fight. I will bring this difficult struggle to an end. It will become scary to steal and to take bribes," he said in a radio address broadcast to the nation. "Corruption is one of the main reasons that the authority of the Russian state is low today," he said.

The battle against corruption is likely to be waged by Boris Nemtsov, the newly appointed First Deputy Prime Minister, who is due to chair a meeting today on how to stamp out corrupt habits.

The young former governor has devised a plan to open up government contracts to public tender in an effort to prevent the common practice of officials being paid bribes to award contracts to friendly firms.

□ **Grozny:** An aide to Salman Raduyev, the Chechen rebel commander, said his boss, one of Russia's most wanted men, had been critically injured in an assassination attempt. Sultan Miyev, Mr Raduyev's military consultant, said Mr Raduyev's car had been blown up early on Wednesday on a road outside the capital, Grozny. He went on to threaten "a revenge blow in Russia" on April 21 or 22. (Reuters)

## US judge rebuked for attack on Britain

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

AN Irish-American judge who launched into an anti-British diatribe while sentencing a British woman for killing her baby in New York has been reprimanded.

Judge Robert Hanophy lashed out at the British legal system last year while sentencing Carolyn Beale for suffocating her newborn daughter and trying to smother the body back home.

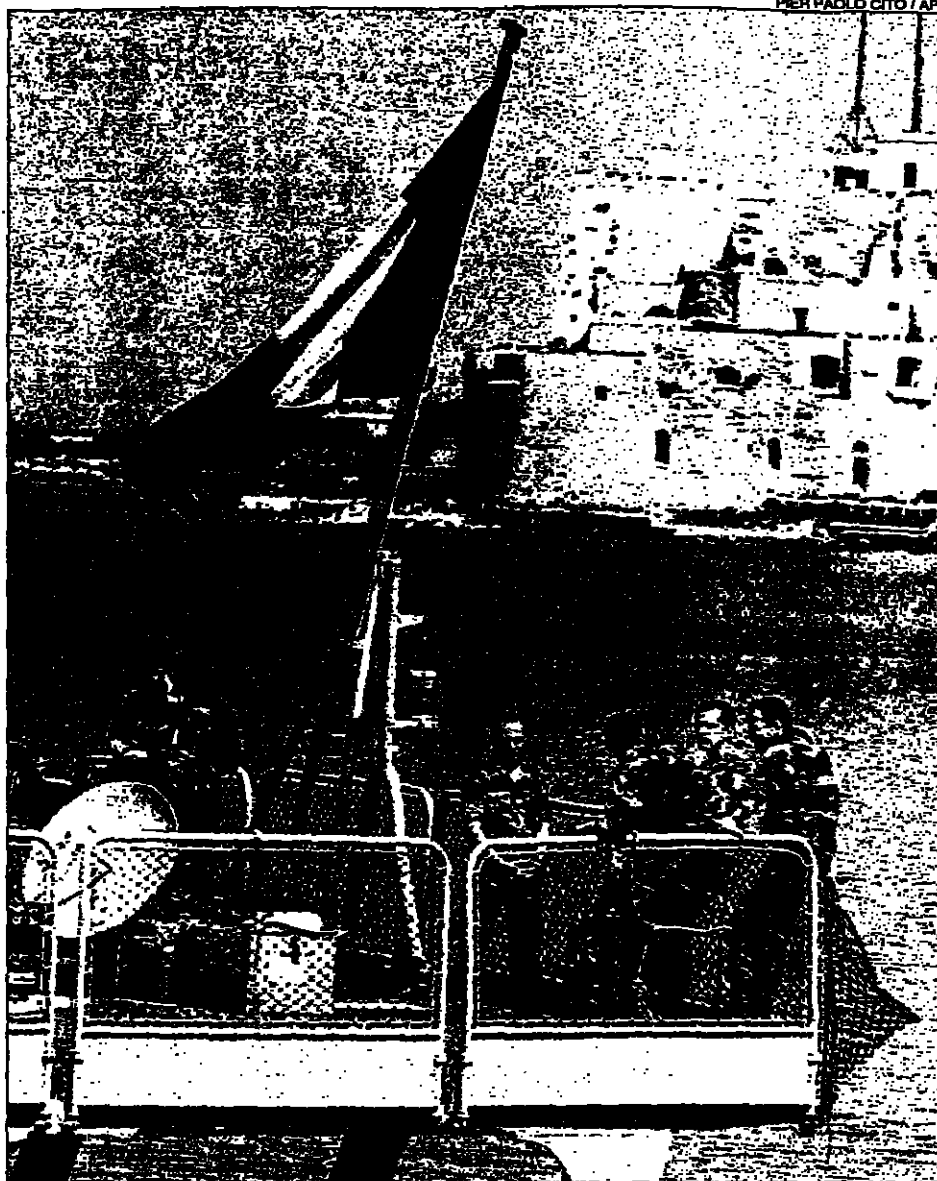
The judge attacked Britain's Infanticide Act, which urges leniency for women suffering from post-partum depression, and derided British courts for wrongly convicting the Guildford Four for IRA bombings.

New York State's Commission on Judicial Conduct ruled that Judge Hanophy's remarks, particularly his reference to Northern Ireland, was "mean-spirited and political in nature". He had "failed to act like an impartial judge".

Judge Hanophy was upset when Beale's father, Peter, had called the American criminal justice system "barbaric and uncivilised" for keeping his daughter waiting 18 months for her case to be settled, including time at a remand centre.

Beale tried to go to New York to testify on Judge Hanophy's behalf. Michael Dowd, her lawyer, said she considered that the judge had treated her fairly by sentencing her to time served plus five years' probation and letting her return to Britain.

A censure by the commission does not bar a judge from sitting on the bench.



French soldiers relax on the *Champlain* in Brindisi harbour before she set sail with 400 troops for Albania yesterday, as part of the Italian-led multinational intervention force meant to secure humanitarian shipments in the strife-torn country (Richard Owen writes). Advance Italian troops arrived at Durres and at Tirana air-

## Aid force sails to Albania

port yesterday to secure the ports and provide a secure corridor.

In Rome, Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary-General, said that the 6,000-strong force — the

bulk of which will begin arriving on Monday — had full UN backing as a "humanitarian mission". But the Italian press said that the force would inevitably find itself helping to "re-store order". Sergio Romano, a former Italian envoy, said that Italy's true aim was "self-interest — stopping thousands of refugees".

## America strikes EU deal on Cuba

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

AMERICA reached a deal to avert a trade war with Europe last night, settling a dispute over strident legislation punishing all foreign investment in Cuba.

The Commerce Department confirmed that an agreement had been struck between Washington and Brussels over the Helms-Burton legislation signed by President Clinton last March.

Sir Leon Brittan, the EU Trade Commissioner, said the accord would permit both sides to address the long-term implications of foreign investment in third countries. He said that Europe could suspend the World Trade Organisation panel considering the complaint, which was due to be filed on Monday.

The Clinton Administration had long hoped to improve relations with its European partners over the issue of business with President Castro's regime, and was thought to have offered a compromise to modify the terms of the legislation.

Stuart Eizenstat, the Under Secretary of Commerce, was to provide details of the agreement last night. These were thought to be similar to a plan which has been circulated in Capitol Hill.

That calls for the European Union to "establish disciplines to deter" private companies in Europe from investing in confiscated property, not merely in Cuba but throughout the world.

In exchange, Congress would be asked to ease certain provisions in the Helms-Burton legislation, including the exclusion from the US of foreign executives whose companies deal with Cuba.

European countries, including Britain, would be asked to adopt an across-the-board principle that corporations not be allowed to profit from investing in properties confiscated without compensation.

President Clinton has employed a regular six-month waiver to delay the most controversial element of the law, which allows any American whose property was confiscated after the 1959 Cuban revolution to sue foreign corporations using their assets.

## Alert for snipers as Pope enters gun-filled 'arena of war' in Sarajevo

FROM TOM WALKER IN SARAJEVO

ON THE broken rooftop the former Bosnian Muslim sniper peered down at the football ground where the Pope will celebrate Mass in front of 50,000 people tomorrow. "I just have to put the arrow on him. It's not so difficult," he said. "The only thing I would have to watch is the wind."

Sarajevo's Kosovo stadium is surrounded by hills and tower blocks,

thousands of vantage points across federation and Serb territory affording a clear view of the pontiff's every step. It is a landscape that nurtured war for three-and-a-half years. Now it is the backdrop for the Pope's riskiest trip: the Catholic Church's head is visiting a gun-ridden city that is 80 per cent Muslim. From 14 floors up, the green grass of the pitch shimmered in sunlight. The stands, the VIP entrance and exit: everything was tantalisingly clear, just half a mile away. For the

modern marksman with telescopic sights, easy pickings.

Yesterday the Bosnian police, Nato troops and the United Nations all said they were satisfied with security arrangements for the visit, which begins this afternoon. But no matter how many police, soldiers and equipment are thrown at Sarajevo, the city remains a sharpshooter's heaven. The sniper spoke chillingly of the pinpoint accuracy of weapons still regularly uncovered by Stabilisation Force troops. He

pointed to the bombed-out skeletons of buildings, ideal for marksmen.

Major Tony White, a Stabilisation Force spokesman, talked down any Day of the Jackal scenarios. "I wouldn't go up on any roofs again," he said. "The police are warning people to stay away from windows and terraces." He added that about 10,000 Bosnian police would be involved in the operation, backed by "hundreds" of Stabilisation Force troops. Alex Ivanko, a UN spokesman

and Sarajevo veteran, said that the Bosnians had been advised by Danish, German and Italian VIP protection experts, and had a security net in place that "equalled standards anywhere else in Europe". On snipers, however, he would not be drawn.

□ **Belgrade:** A gunman killed the feared commander of Serbian President Milosevic's security apparatus as he dined with his son in a Belgrade restaurant early yesterday. He was the highest-ranking

figure to die in a "professional" public shooting, a common event in the Serb capital. Victims are usually black market mafia members.

Media reports said that the police colonel-general and Deputy Interior Minister, Radovan Stojicic, 46 — known by the nickname of Badza [Big Guy] — died instantly.

He commanded riot police in the city during three months of opposition protests against the rigging of elections by President Milosevic. (Reuters)

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## Spanish conservatives protest over political satire programme that leaves no holds barred

## Puppet regime's power

## MADRID FILE

by TUNKU VARADARAJAN

A TELEvised rabble of rubber puppets, modelled on Britain's *Spitting Image*, has led to a major ruckus among Madrid's conservative politicians. Appearing weekly on Canal Plus, a private television channel, the irreverent puppets mock a range of Spanish politicians from the austere Prime Minister, José María Aznar, to the voluble Felipe González, the Socialist opposition leader. No one is spared from their rough-hewn lampooning.

Yet members of the ruling conservative Popular Party (PP) believe that *Las noticias del guñol* (The news from Punch and Judy)

singles them out for special abuse. There is some truth in the accusation, as the channel's owner, Jesús de Polanco, who also owns the left-wing paper *El País*, is an unequivocal foe of the Aznar Government.

That humour should provide a battleground for Spain's conservatives and Señor de Polanco is ironic. He is a humourless man who was once privately described by a newspaper executive as a

modern-day "cross between the Sphinx and Torquemada", the infamous Inquisitor-General.

Tired of being derided week after week, conservatives now want revenge. Leading members of the party, who have received backing from the right-wing ABC daily newspaper, have called for their own programme of rubber puppets — a "contra-guñol", or a sort of *Spitting Back*.

In an editorial last week, ABC attacked the programme as "a laboratory for Socialist agit-prop... at the exclusive service of Felipe González". All politicians on the Right, the newspaper continued, were depicted invariably as "buffoons and illiterates". Conservative politicians were within their rights to call for a "television corrective".

Angel Acebes, the PP secretary-general, confessed to being worried by the broadcasts. "The worst aspect is that the programme is made for purposes other than humour."

"I don't mind if programmes are made for the amusement of the public, but when they are straight-



José María Aznar, left, arm-wrestles with Felipe González on the controversial puppet show

forward vehicles of a certain political opinion, they should announce themselves clearly as such."

The controversy has provided welcome publicity for Canal Plus, as viewing figures leapt by several thousand after ABC's assault.

Aware that an attack on rubber puppets could prove politically counter-productive, senior ministers have scurried to the press to deny that they found *Las noticias del guñol* offensive.

Rodrigo Rato, the Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for the economy, said he thought the programme perfectly amusing. A source within the ruling party, however, revealed that Señor Rato's is a minority view.

"We detest those nasty little dolls," he said, "and that nasty little man Polanco."

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"We detest those nasty little dolls," he said, "and that nasty little man Polanco."

## Fighting talk makes dons speechless

UNITED by a clear aversion to English as the world's lingua franca, hundreds of writers, politicians and publishers from the Hispanic world held a conference in Mexico this week aimed at turning Spanish into a truly global language.

Yet the learned cohorts, debating in the colonial city of Zacatecas, have piqued the Spanish Royal Academy in Madrid, which regards itself as the sole bastion of the Spanish language.

The organisers of the conference — the Mexican Foreign Ministry and the Instituto Cervantes, Spain's version of the British Council — neglected, astonishingly, to invite representatives of the academy.

Carlos Bousoño, the writer and academician, fumed: "It is highly improper that the Royal Academy should not be invited to a debate on the future of the Spanish language." Its presence would have lent weight to the conference, many believe, as it has set itself the daunting task of finding ways to protect Spanish from the "Anglo-Saxon onslaught", as a local paper put it.

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## Assisi frescoes 'not by Giotto'

By RICHARD OWEN

THE peace of the Umbrian hilltop town of Assisi has been shattered by claims by two respected authorities on Italian art that 13th-century frescoes in the town's great Basilica are not by Giotto, as long believed, but his neglected older mentor, Pietro Cavallini.

The theory threatens to stand art history on its head, since Giotto is traditionally credited as the artist who led Western art away from the flat, stylised depictions of Byzantine art and towards the naturalism and perspective of modern Western painting. Dante depicts Giotto in the *Divine Comedy* as the man who created the starting point for all Western art by giving it life and movement.

In the massive Upper Basilica of Assisi, brown-habited Franciscan friars use electric torches to highlight details of the great series of frescoes on the lower walls, painted between 1290 and 1295. But according to Professor Federico Zeri, a leading art historian, and Bruno Zanardi, an art restorer who has spent ten years cleaning the cycle, only seven of the 28 frescoes can be said "with any certainty" to be by Giotto di Bondone (1266-1337).

Most of the others, the two experts have concluded, are by Cavallini (active 1273-1321), who was feted in his time as a



St Francis Casting out Devils in Arezzo, credited to Cavallini

painter and mosaicist of genius, but whose reputation has been overshadowed by that of his pupil. Professor Zeri's investigations in Assisi with Signor Zanardi are being published as *Il Cantiere di Giotto* (Giotto's Workshop). They have identified three painters who worked on the St Francis series. "We don't know who the first one was," Signor

Zanardi said. "The second was Cavallini, and the third Giotto." Those paintings assigned to Giotto by the two experts include "probably" the first — *St Francis as a Youth in the Assisi Market Place* — and "definitely" the last six, including *St Francis Parting from St Clare*, *St Francis Canonisation of St Francis*, *St Francis Cures a Wounded Man in Spain* and *St Francis Preaching to the Birds* and *St Francis Casting out Devils from Arezzo* — are credited to Cavallini.

Cavallini is usually considered one of many influences on Giotto, together with Cimabue and Duccio. But Signor Zanardi said he had spotted "unmistakable resemblances" between the Assisi frescoes and surviving works by Cavallini in *Santa Maria di Trastevere* (on the life of Mary) and *Santa Cecilia di Trastevere* (Christ, the Apostles and the Last Judgment), both in Rome. Signor Zanardi said that the discovery "in no way detracts from Giotto's greatness... but we shall have to reassess Cavallini's contribution to the development of art". Confusion had arisen partly because of the mistaken assertion by Giorgio Vasari, the Renaissance artist and biographer, that Cavallini was the pupil and follower of Giotto, when in fact the reverse was true.

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## ■ OPINION

**If Truffaut could cross the great divide between scribes and directors, why not our critics?**



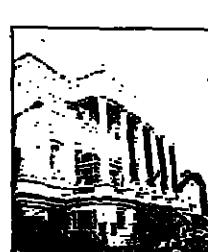
## ■ BUILDINGS

**New neighbours for St Paul's: the City of London will soon look rather different**

THE TIMES  
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## ■ ON MONDAY

**Is Covent Garden selling the public short? Rodney Milnes scrutinises a makeshift season**

I won't be half as much fun as the revenge tragedies of the Jacobean era, of course, which invariably end with some crazed Medici nymphomaniac poisoning the king. But the idea of a director suggesting across the stage, knee-deep in gouged eyes and disembowelled torsos, and plunging a blade into her incestuous half-brother with a fruity curse. Nevertheless, the revenge drama currently being enacted at the Battersea Arts Centre will surely make up in verbal barbs what it lacks in corpses.

Four intrepid theatre critics have crossed the footlights, and the alleged Great Divide, by agreeing to direct plays. They include two scribes whose exquisitely honed prose graces these pages — the seasoned Jeremy Kingston and the vibrant young James Christopher — as well as *The Guardian's* Michael Billington and the *London Evening Standard's* Nicholas de Jongh.

In the audience last night were some of the theatre directors whose productions the critics have

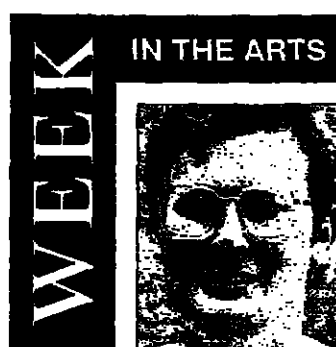
## Will this production run and ruin?

so wittily belittled in the past. And, in the spirit of the enterprise, several directors are turning into critics for a night. Which is perhaps just as well, since some of the other critics (ie, the ones who aren't directing shows) have refused to review the ones that are, on the grounds that they don't write about amateur theatre. I say, girls, calm down. Anyway, Sir Peter Hall's review of *My Kingdom's* efforts will be in *The Times* on Monday. (No more than 600 words please, Hall, and do try to keep the paragraphs short.)

All this came about because of Michael Bogdanov, a director whose nickname among theatre critics — "Bodger" — goes some way to explaining why he hates them with more vigour than anybody else on the British stage. Except, perhaps the terrifying Steven Berkoff, who always seems

to be on the point of emulating Vincent Price in *Theatre of Blood* and embarking on a bout of hackwork. Or Jonathan Miller, whose monthly threats never to direct opera in Britain again are invariably accompanied by a tirade against critics who fail to understand his point. (The first time I ever talked to Miller his greeting remark was: "The *Times's* review of my *Tosca* production this morning was disgracefully impertinent — and I use the word in the 17th-century sense.")

Then there's the pushy teenage violinist Vanessa-Mae, who recently took an advertisement to cast aspersions on a critic's qualifications. And Stephen Fry, who burst into tears and left the country after being panned. Actually, now I think about it, almost everybody in the arts hates critics. Anyway, last year Bogdanov



RICHARD MORRISON

wrote a *New Statesman* article claiming that critics don't have the foggiest notion about what goes on behind the scenes. That taunt has been around as long as show business itself, and it's quite

understandable. After all, if you have spent months of your life, and large wads of other people's money, mounting a spectacular show which is then chewed up in print by a bunch of (in your view) myopic, malicious and mentally deranged hacks, you can easily believe yourself to be the victim of impertinence — in the 17th-century sense, of course.

But is it true that critics as a breed have virtually no experience of what they huff and puff about? And if it is, does it matter? The answer to the first question is that there have been many practitioner-critics in history, and there are a good number today. Berlioz and Schumann wrote about music with as much passion as they wrote the actual minims and quavers. The history of cinema is stuffed with critics-turned-directors, especially in France: think of

Truffaut, Chabrol, Godard, Tavernier. The *nouvelle vague* was being vague in print long before it was being *nouvelle* on screen.

Obvious painter-critics are Ruskin and Fry, but three present-day British critics — William Packer, William Weaver and Giles Aitj — recently mounted a joint exhibition. As for the theatre, Shaw was also a magnificent critic and so was Tynan before he got interested in sex (never a good idea for critics) and devised *Oh, Calcutta!*.

Clearly, if you know your artform from the inside you have certain advantages as a critic. You can scatter lots of coded secrets into your text. But there are dangers. You can get too friendly with people whom you may have to review unfavourably. True, the female music critic who declared that she always found it

useful to "discuss a conductor's interpretation in the bath with him afterwards" is fondly remembered. She was exceptional — in every sense, I'm sure. A more common problem is what happens in the literary world: Camden Town buddies reviewing each other's books.

No single philosophy holds true for all newspaper critics. Some take the narrow consumerist line that their only real obligation is to tell their readers whether a show is worth the ticket-price. Others feel a duty to guide performers, playwrights or composers to perfection of their craft. Others have a missionary zeal about promoting a particular school.

And there are some working in British newspapers today who nearly always get everything wrong, but are such good fun to read that no sane editor would ever sack them. You see, critics are in the entertainment business too. And they don't need to start directing plays to prove it. But dahlings — break a leg!

## ARCHITECTURE: Marcus Binney on how the Square Mile learnt to stay open after hours

The City of London is changing for the better. And, like all the best changes in London, it is not planned, but organic.

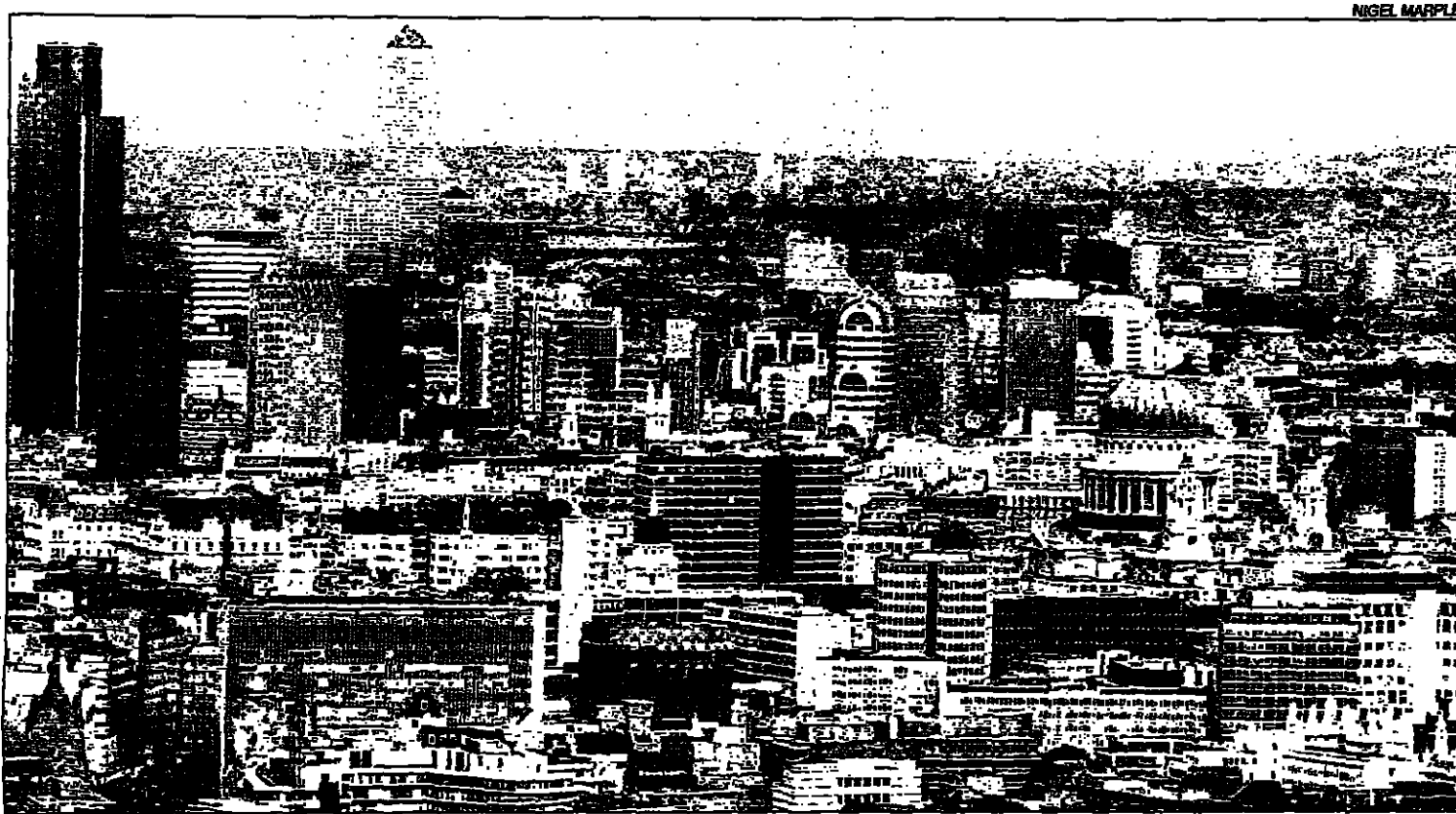
For years, the single-minded policy of the City fathers was offices, offices and more offices. All other uses were steadily driven out — small businesses, shops, and not a resident outside the Barbican.

Now, by the greatest of ironies, just as the anti-terrorist Ring of Steel has been extended, the invisible wall is coming down. One of the first to see, and seize, the opportunity has been Sir Terence Conran, who has bought the rundown Great Eastern Hotel at Liverpool Street station with Malmaison, the group that has brought stylish hotels to inner-city Glasgow and Edinburgh's once famously rough port of Leith.

"People say to me the City is dead after eight o'clock in the evenings and at weekends," Conran says. "I reply of course — nothing's open and there's nothing to do." Conran has permission to restore the ornate Abercorn Rooms with an oyster bar, chop house and brasseries, and to sort out the warren of accommodation upstairs by introducing a large, circular atrium with bedrooms opening off the balconies. It is a two-year task, but later this summer Conran will test the water by taking the roof restaurant on Lord Palumbo's No 1 Poultry.

On the hotel front, Conran is likely to be beaten by the Franklin group, owners of Duke's Hotel in St James's, which hopes shortly to obtain permission to convert the former City Bank at 5, Threadneedle Street into a super-comfortable 65-bedroom hotel. The director, David Naylor-Leyland, says: "In the West End we have guests who get in at one in the morning and leave again at six. They're over here to do deals in the City. We'll give them large bedrooms on the spot, with all the telephones and computer back-up they need."

Naylor-Leyland argues that the fall in office values has forced owners to look at other uses. Recently Thoreson Investments bought the sumptuous Edwardian Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (more recently Barclays) in



London's business and banking centre, seen here from the British Telecom tower, has been a no-go area for seekers of nightlife — until now

## Leases on life for the City

Gracechurch Street with a view to converting it into another hotel. Anthony Thorpe, a director, says: "We've been talking to an American group which specialises in business hotels. The banking hall, with its ornate domes and Chinese figurines, has been pre-let to a restaurant."

Thorpe has just obtained permission to convert a handsome Edwardian office at 15, Trinity Square, into 20 apartments looking out over the Tower of London and the Thames.

NatWest now has its own

development team at work in the City. The slick exterior of Seifert's NatWest Tower has been restored as it was before the IRA bomb explosion in 1993, and an eye-catching entrance hall is being added at the bottom hall.

NatWest's banking hall in Threadneedle Street has just re-opened as an art gallery, and Sir Michael Hopkins has been called in to provide an imaginative solution for the bank's huge slice of empty historic property along Old Broad Street. This spring it will unveil the newly restored banking hall by Sir Edwin Cooper at 1, Prince's Street.

For years, London's tourists were bussed to St Paul's and the Tower, but never encouraged to explore the City. Now the Bank of England has a museum overflowing with Japanese tourists. Not long ago, the infamous Templeman report suggested closure or disposal of 27 of the City's churches. Now the threat has vanished and the new bishop has taken up residence in the old Deanery, near St Paul's. St Helen's Bishopsgate and St Andrew Undershaft have been restored after bomb damage.

as has the fire-damaged St Mary at Hill, although more money is needed to put back the superb Wren woodwork. The best surprise of all is the rich interior of Bevis Marks Synagogue of 1701, whose restoration was completed last year.

The City's famous Victorian markets are there to visit — Leadenhall, freshly painted and still selling meat and poultry and Smithfield, half-way through a £20 million programme of works to meet EC regulations. Spitalfields, condemned to demolition, now has tennis courts, playgrounds and London's first new opera house in a century, while Billingsgate fish market — saved, restored and then left empty for a decade — now has people busy at work in yet another branch of NatWest.

Liverpool Street station, its spectacular Victorian ironwork reconfigured to a new track layout, is worth a visit for the sushi bar alone, where dishes come circling round on a midge conveyor.

The City's numerous hand-some pubs serve far better food than those in the West End. Marks & Spencer now has two stores in the Square Mile. A smart new Pizz Express, sporting with blue neon, is suspended over the crossroads at London Wall.

There are plans afoot to turn the magnificent courtyard of the Royal Exchange, opposite the Bank of England, into yet another large brasserie, although Guardian Royal Exchange, which occupies the offices above, is reportedly hostile to the idea. But with Marco Pierre White being talked of as the chef, the pressure is on.

## Working, class, hero

THE defining moment on the first of Bryan Adams's five nights in the sterile venue of Wembley Arena came 40 minutes into a two-and-a-half-hour set, Nigel Williamson writes. As he sang (*Everything I Do I Do It For You*, the syrupy ballad that sat at No 1 for 16 weeks in 1991, I noticed that at least half the audience was singing along, eyes closed.

It was a triumphant display of the transforming power of rock'n'roll: in some temporary but powerful suspension of disbelief, people had convinced themselves that, for a moment, Adams really was doing it just for them. In the face of such rapport, the critic feels almost an irrelevance.

Adams's detractors say that his ballads have a paint-by-numbers approach and the up-tempo songs sound as if they have rolled off a production line. But few performers fill in the blanks or press all the right buttons quite so meticulously. You know that your musical emotions are being manipulated, but Adams does it in such an engaging way that you don't mind.

He first appeared on a mini-stage in the middle of the auditorium for two solo numbers, before taking the main stage with a five-

## POP

piece band for *The Only Thing That Looks Good on Me is You*, while eight models paraded on a catwalk in front of him. Adams went on to perform nearly 30 songs of varying style and quality, from the great *Rain to You* (even if the guitar riff is borrowed from Blue Oyster Cult) to the dire *I'll Die with a Heart* (the title of the album which, at more than double the age, he somehow managed to sing without even a hint of irony).

The prickly sensitivity of his voice means that, like Rod Stewart, Adams can switch easily from tear-jerkers such as *Straight from the Heart* to raucous rockers like *Hey Elvis*. Back on the mini-stage in the middle of the crowd, he and the band essayed a punk version of Eddie Cochran's *C'mon Everybody* before ending with *Let's Make a Night to Remember* and Adams's anthem, the stomping *Summer of '69* (the year in which the clocks appear to have stopped in this Peter Pan world of mythical rock'n'roll youth).

Adams does not set trends and no one would call him an innovator. It's just that he rocks harder than almost all of the competition.

The Flexible Mortgage  
See Page 38

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CHANGING TIMES



## Alan Coren



### What has the Profumo Affair to do with my bathroom?

I have just been squatting on the Cliveden bidet. Not, sadly, the bidet of Cliveden, for I should have been tickled no end — as it were — to have settled my buttocks where the great and good once settled theirs: to have savoured just the merest snatch of how it must have felt, in 1963, to be Christine Keeler, staring at the golden taps and wondering what a nice girl like her was doing in a joint like this. Waiting, perhaps, for the War Minister, John Profumo, to bang on the door and inquire whether she was going to be all bloody day in there. But this bidet of mine wasn't in Cliveden, it was in Islington. It was only called the Cliveden. It wasn't even connected, let alone well. And I had my trousers on.

I had them on when I sat on the Sandringham, too. Do not begin to think about what I began to think about when I sat on the Sandringham. Though, mind you, it wasn't half as unnerving as what I thought about when I sat on the Cottage. That is another bathroom suite in the Armitage Shanks range. So is the Tiffany. And the Lichfield. And the Claudette. There they all were in the Islington showroom, in serried rank, set up and twinkled to their best by loving hands eager for them to appeal to the potential owners who strolled, and stared, and touched, and murmured, and pondered. It was a little like Battersea Dogs Home, except for the imploring eyes. That and the fact that if you are looking for a new dog, you do not try sitting on it.

The assistant was not entirely happy about the sitting. In truth, I was not that happy myself, because I was wearing my brown trilby: readers who may occasionally have spotted my front-page mugshot in this hat will perhaps appreciate my unease better than those who haven't, but even these latter may be able to empathise. One does not cut much of a dash sitting on a bidet in a brown trilby. And, since you suggest, one cuts even less of a dash by taking it off and sitting on a bidet with a brown trilby on one's knee. I cannot explain why this is so. You had to be there. I did, anyway. I had to be there because we are having a new bathroom built, and there is no point ordering new bathroom furniture without trying it out, checking its comfort, all that, so while my wife lay in a number of baths, I sat on the other stuff. That is why the assistant was not entirely happy, because what his elegant showroom had been set up to show was his goods at their very best, looking just as they did in the smart glossy brochure, and in that brochure Armitage Shanks, though it had chosen to include a slim girl in a small towel coming out of the shower, had not chosen to include a plump man in a big hat sitting on the bidet. You could tell how utterly happy the assistant was by looking at him while he was looking at the other potential customers looking at me, and, as the result, probably becoming less potential by the second.

To say nothing of the fact that, whenever I sat on something new, we had to talk about it. We had to talk about what, both male and female, had to get washed, and whether what I was sitting on was up to these tasks irrespective of gender — the Claudette, for example, and despite its name, has, for a man, a very useful indentation of the rim which is absent from, surprisingly, the Cottage; but then again, the Cottage incorporates a soap recess, which the Claudette ignores — and the assistant, though excellent in every other way, was not quite up to discussing with a man sitting below him in a brown trilby how best, for example, to get his works over the rim of the Cottage in order to take advantage of the soap dish absent from the works-friendly Claudette.

Though none of this — it was, after all, man-to-man — was quite as tricky for him to handle as the questions I was required to ask on Mrs Coren's behalf, regarding spray-spread, jet power and so on, not least because Mrs Coren's head kept suddenly reappearing around us as she sat up in different baths, and the assistant was clearly unsettled by the risk of her overhearing something which concerned her intimately.

It didn't bother me, that. It served her right for insisting on testing only the baths because, she said, it would be embarrassing for her to do the bidet. I fail to see why. She doesn't even own a hat.

The British love Italian cuisine, but in Italy they now prefer to diet or eat fast food, says Philip Delves Broughton

## Forget Chiantishire: try Britain for la dolce vita

Ever since Caesar crossed the Channel, his head smeared in oil, his nose turned up at the wood-scrubbed natives, the English have envied the Italian way of life. Rome could be falling, Vesuvius exploding, the Allies invading, but the Italians always seemed to find time for lunch. As the early Britons grubbed and foraged, the Romans sat in their encampments gorging on aurochs dripping and heavily seasoned fowl.

To this day, Chiantishire entices the English with the promise of a world where the fatness of an olive is more important than the next job promotion, the roundness of a wine of greater moment than the minutiae of a mega-deal.

In Italian cities, it seemed that even the most hyperactive businessman still had time to sit down with his family for multi-course meals in the middle of the day. Not any longer. According to a report from the Italian National Institute of Nutrition, Italians are not only eating less, they are eating less well. At the same time, Britain, having learnt so much from the Italians, is ready and willing to take on the mantle as the epicurean's paradise.

In 1996, the Italian food industry registered a fall in production for the first time in more than a decade. While sales of pasta have held up, less meat, wine, vegetables and dairy products are being sold. Most Italians can still make

spaghetti but panic at anything more complicated, preferring to buy ready-made and frozen dishes instead. Rather than sitting down for a proper lunch, they prefer to peck at low-fat, vitamin-enriched fast foods.

In pop cultural terms, the damage was done when Sophia Loren revealed that she kept her looks by eating sparingly and working out regularly, puncturing the myth of the pasta-eating Neapolitan fertility goddess.

Luciano Pavarotti did not help the Italian male by going on a diet of lemons and not much else. He stopped being a sensual, pleasure-loving artist and became instead a shame-faced fat man.

Others argue that Italians are not eating properly because they are catching up with modern social trends. The traditional *mamma*, trailing behind mothers in northern Europe, is now increasingly working as well as looking after children, so has less time for the loving preparation of *framistù*. Britain passed through its snack phase, like the recession, earlier than most and has

emerged with a more sophisticated fast-food culture. Italy may soon catch up.

But there is another more sinister factor. Italians have turned away from square meals to snacks at the same time that they have been leap-frogging Britain in terms of GDP. The British contest some of the figures, but in Italy they are confident and proud that the Nineties have seen them trumping Britain in economic terms for the first time since the days of Imperial Rome.

The sorts of people who measure national prosperity simply by GDP are also the sorts who neglect to eat properly. Their ascendancy has meant that the Italians have microwaved their quality of life for a higher position up an economic league table.

"It's chaos, above all mental chaos," Michele Carruba, a leading Italian nutritionist, told *La Stampa*. "We are losing a very healthy alimentary tradition based on carbohydrates, protein and a variety of vegetables — the old

tradition of 'a food for every day', gnocchi on Thursday, fish on Friday and so on." Neuroses, he adds, are spreading as a result.

The food mood in Britain is quite the reverse. For many years, the British sat at the feet of the impossibly haughty French chefs and their alchemy which created such incredible sauces, roux and pastry. It took Italy to alert us to the fact that our French fixation had yielded little more than the *crêpe Suzette*, a showy, sugary, banal concoction, as redolent of the 1970s as Ford Capri.

From pizzas and pasta at one end to Elizabeth David and the *River Café Cook Book* at the other, Italy was the most important influence in teaching Britain about the importance of quality over quantity of ingredients, elegant simplicity in presentation over pointless elaboration.

Italian food freed us from Gallic hegemony with the lesson that in food as in modernist architecture, form followed function. Use decent ingredients and they will look and taste right with

minimal adornment. The trickery of French cooking was a con trick. Pasta, pesto, parma ham and parmesan were simple, unembarrassable foods. Restaurants soon had to keep up with their increasingly demanding customers.

Since 1990, Italian food exports to this country have gone up by more than 40 per cent. Britain is among the biggest wine-drinking countries in Europe. London is said to possess some of the finest Italian restaurants in the world, Italy included. Italians, whether businessmen, footballers or diplomats, say it is easier these days to live *la dolce vita* in London than in Rome or Milan.

To learn that real Italians are now rushing home to eat pre-packaged, flavour-enhanced *lasagne al forno* is like finding out that a model schoolmistress has taken to eating with her fingers and telling filthy jokes.

In a week in which temperatures in Rome, the epicurean poet Horace were to reside at his ethereal Sabine farm, sip the Falernian and look down for his heirs, he would have trouble finding them. For they would not be there among the Barbour-clad rat-racers of Venice or Turin but farther north, among the easy, contented full-bellied people of Britain. "*Nunc est bibendum*," he would say, "between mouthfuls of honey-roasted dormice. Not bad for a bunch of barbarians."

## I prefer my morality to be private, Your Grace

Prelatical presumption is treated with undue respect in elections. And I dislike clerics telling me how to lead my life

Every good election needs a bishop. As the argument gets acrimonious, as the soundbites start to sting, noses twitch across the Close. On goes the surplice and the mitre, down comes the Book of Platitudes. *The Times* is telephoned. A shiver runs through the middle classes as they prepare for a mild flagellation. Episcopal intervention in politics is like Roganite or Lammias, a harmless feast without which England would not be England.

But is it harmless? This week it was the Archbishop of Canterbury who felt moved to utter. The Chief Rabbi had already thundered his new moral autocracy. The Bishop of Liverpool, the Right Rev David Sheppard, on Monday gave the unemployment debate his usual left-arm spin. Asked whether it was right to intervene in politics, he said that "underneath social and political issues lie spiritual truths... politicians are not the only people who can bring about change."

Then on Thursday came Dr Carey's moment. "Trust has suddenly become a significant electoral word," he wrote, "and property so... Our society has become morally reticent, even inarticulate." He protested at the "popular cultural assumption that to try to define something as good and right in an absolute sense is an unwarranted and potentially oppressive incursion" on the private domain.

If I were to rewrite election law I would ban the word morality from the campaign. I would ban its derivatives: morals, moraliser, immoral and

"remoralise", and exile to a hermit's cell all who broke the rule. Pulpit clichés and paragonical platitudes are one thing. Like 30-second phone-ins, party politicals and vapid manifestos, they are the background static of an election. But giving a moral overlay to an argument about policy is more than that. It seeks to add a magic ingredient to help that argument on its way.

In the case of Wednesday's Council of Churches' report on unemployment, the purpose was unmistakable. If Labour will not speak up for the poor, then the churches will. The report called for higher taxes on the rich, a national minimum wage, more rights for trade unions and a shorter working week. The report implied that higher redistributive taxes were a moral virtue and protested at the "moral indignation of the rich over the dishonesty of the poor".

From a Labour candidate this would evoke no more than a call from Tony Blair's office, with orders to stand down and accept a peerage in the new Parliament. From a multi-faith church body it carries a protective halo. On presenting the report, Bishop Sheppard was not torn limb from limb by a BBC arm-wrestler. He was treated with the deference due to the cloth. You do not interrupt a bishop halfway through his first soundbite. The Force is with him.

Bishop Sheppard is an old trooper. He has used his pulpit to win more cash for Liverpool over the years than any other city in Britain. His diocese is an exemplar of the public sector dependency he so fervently espouses. If his policies worked, Merseyside would by now be



The Archbishop of Canterbury: exponent of a new moral correctness?

outperforming Silicon Valley. They have not worked. But at least the bishop carries his torch with panache. When Mr Blair reforms local government, he should stand as mayor of Liverpool and test his views on the hustings.

The Archbishop and the Chief Rabbi are treading a more subtle, and thus more dangerous, path. Both seek priority on the political agenda for their favourite policies, especially on education and the family, and do so by claiming that these policies contain a special moral yeast. We are nervous of absolutism, says Dr Carey. The relativist barbarians are at the gates. While Bishop Sheppard wants to make young mothers stay at home to look after their children, the Archbishop wants a shorter national curriculum so "morality" can be taught in school. Other authoritarians are about to ban hunting, tag parents of juvenile delinquents and appoint censors to investigate school books. Who knows where this will lead? The new moral correctness will make its political variety seem tame.

I see this as a concerted attempt to de-rationalise politics. We now have senior

clergy variously declaring that a wider tax base, higher tax rates and, by implication, expanding public spending are "moral". They imply that (Tory) efforts to reduce the State are immoral. Higher social security spending is treated as good *a priori*. Single parenthood is evil. Divorced or separated parents are treated as moral defectives. The tax and benefit system should be changed to reflect this prejudice.

From other corners of the same wood we are told that it is moral to incarcerate young criminals in what I (and most other European states) would regard as barbaric conditions. It is moral to hold parents responsible for the crimes of their children and moral to oppose abortion. Morality is considered a "topic" in the school curriculum. Teachers must teach "what is right and wrong" on pain of dismissal. As for debating the reform of drugs laws, try doing so without at some point being accused of the most craven Socratic corruption.

Throwing dollops of morality at political arguments is pernicious. I incline to Tom Paine's view, that when

two men claim to think alike on ethics they have probably not finished arguing. Of course we have moral sensibilities, and would like them to embrace family, friends, neighbourhoods, even nations. The problem is as old as Plato: how to handle clashes between our "shared values" and those of other individuals and groups.

Dr Carey rests his case for a more interventionist morality on the mere fact that he detects that shared values exist. I am not so sure. If the values are shared, what need have we of episcopal intervention? If they are not shared, whose values are we imposing?

Dr Carey protested in *The Times* this week that the new curriculum was only going to "describe" shared values. He was concerned not just about what was shared but what the Church believed "should be" shared. Note how easily the moralist slides from announcing a consensus to prescribing one. Dr Carey will doubtless say that I am nitpicking. His words were really ecclesiastical fog meant as uplifting electoral jolity. Yet Dr Carey, like the Chief Rabbi, is careful to deride "false theories of privatised morality" and talk of "a society disfigured by widespread moral confusion". He knows what he is about: the extension of state power into the private lives of citizens. Bishops were once less timid about using morality as a political trump card. *Guarda il Gran Inquisitor*.

One man's shared values is another's superstitious meddling. I confess to preferring a privatised morality to a nationalised one. I dislike Dr Carey or the Chief Rabbi or the Home Secretary or the Chief Inspector of Schools telling me how to lead my life and bring up my children. And I take the old liberal view that what I dislike being done to me I should not want done to others.

In his book *After Virtue*, the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre links our "lost comprehension of morality" to the decay of old Aristotelian virtues. The rules of morality, half-remembered fragments of ancient cultures, were often a sub-class of authoritarian politics. Like Dr Carey's shared values, they were to be obeyed "because I say so". They were bound to wither in the sun of liberty. But what to put in their place? MacIntyre's answer was democracy, "the construction of local forms of community, within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained". This layered democracy should still sit in watch over the authoritarians of the Right and the libertarians of the Left — nowadays sometimes vice versa. A democracy settles all its disputes by treating them as political. Treat them as moral and the result is war.

Reducing unemployment, helping children out of poverty, handling drugs or countering crime can move us to passion, anger and moral outrage. If I hold any creed in this matter, it is that only democracy can resolve them. If there is confusion in Britain, it is caused by the decay of democratic institutions. Moral supremacy is for escapists. But for the moment, democracy has the floor. Give it a break, and let the bishops return to their cells.

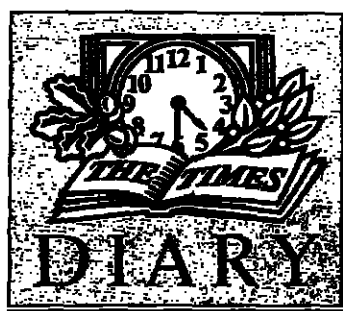
## Golden tune

THOSE who want to witness the Jimmy Goldsmith shuffle should don their crepe-soled shoes and head towards Alexandra Palace in north London tomorrow. There, the gleaming bald buccaneer will attend a rally, introduced for the first time by the party's new anthem, a single, *Let the People Decide*.

Let the People Decide (*the Rabble Army Song*), released on CD on Monday, is the work of former Motown songwriter and Walthamstow candidate for the Referendum Party, the Rev George Hargreaves, co-pastor with his wife



Maxine the Motown sound



Maxine, of the Hephzibah Christian Centre in Hackney.

Maxine sings on the record and is likened to Aretha Franklin by Hargreaves, who produced his records for the well-endowed chanteuse Sinitta and wrote the signature tune for *Pebble Mill* at One.

"We expect the record to get into the top 40, and by election week it should be in the top ten," said Hargreaves yesterday. With a catchy refrain which runs "They're the Rabble Army singing 'let the people decide'", Hargreaves is confident that it will be a hit.

Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare has developed an interest in stonework calligraphy. He is par-

ticularly taken by an engraved piece of waxed Welsh slate on display at the Wolsey Fine Arts Gallery in Notting Hill. The engraving was of William Blake's words: *Rest before Labour. I'm not sure that the "boss", as Archer likes to call John Major, would approve.*

### Falling star

THE SITWELLS are in despair. Their brightest young protégé, William Sitwell, great-nephew of Dame Edith and former squeeze of flushed-faced blonde broker Samantha Phillips, has taken voluntary redundancy from *The Express*. After working his way up from lean researcher to portly showbiz correspondent, he is looking around for gainful employment. Among his interests is the composition of "sensitive love poetry" — although he doesn't follow the example of his great-aunt, who recited her poems through a loud-hailer. "I'm looking at darts commentary," he said yesterday. "Ever since Sid Waddell left the BBC, I've thought there was a gap I could fill."

### Good sport

A SHOT in the eye for the anti-hunting lobby comes from Lord

Gillford, son of the Earl of Clanwilliam, a man who claims to have lost a finger as a result of a shooting accident on his stag night. Happiest trudging the moors with a 12-bore, the 36-year-old motorbike rider launches a magazine for the Barbour-clad this weekend with a solid wall of aristocracy behind him: a third of his founding subscribers are peers of the realm.

Gillford's magazine *The Sporting Twenty-Pager*, produced in association with the British Field Sports Society, kicks off with a forward from the Duke of Westmin-



Only another 20 days to go

ster and will contain newspaper extracts about field sports. "We've got eight dukes, dozens of earls and at least a brace of marquesses," he says. There's no doubt that a copy or two will find its way to Balmoral and Sandringham.

### Speechless

ACCUSATIONS of a callous disregard for the Labour deputy leader John Prescott have been levelled at party apparatchiks in the London headquarters at Millbank Tower. Not only has Mr Prescott been sidelined from the main action in a bus tour of the provinces, but he has also been given a mobile phone which is useless.

Dispatched to Wales this week, he discovered that his modern cellular phone was out of range. "His signal is too weak," confirmed his office yesterday.

Not even his accompanying press secretary could help. "It's a very bad line," he said. "I can't hear you. You'll have to ring back." Back to the press office in London. Is there any chance of getting through to Mr Prescott at all? "They are in a very bad area. Mobiles just come and go, you know how it is. It seems to be a bad reception area for some reason."

How long will he be incommunicado? "I don't know. It depends



Kira Jolliffe: smoking out the bluffers in her poker club

how big the bad area is. I just don't know how big the black spot is."

### Hot at poker

IN THE smoke-filled basements of west London's Notting Hill, they are talking of the 26-year-old fashion stylist whose weekly poker sessions are part of the gambler's calendar. Kira Jolliffe, daughter of the cartoonist Gray Jolliffe, repre-

sents British hopes at the Women's World Poker Championships in Las Vegas. Next month, she will show for the tournament at Binion's Horseshoe Casino to take on poker faces from Moscow to Madras. The minimum down payment of \$1,000 is just an indication of what is to come. "I've heard that it's pure hedonism," she draws.

P-H-S















10-10-1964







# Business disposed to do business with Labour

By PHILIP BASSETT  
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

LABOUR'S election manifesto aimed specifically at industry and services — the first by a political party in Britain — was broadly welcomed by business yesterday.

A number of key business figures endorsed Labour while Britain's leading business bodies maintained their political neutrality but welcomed the focus on business issues that the manifesto offered. Conservative and Liberal Democrat leaders attacked Labour's move.

Launching *Equipping Britain for the Future* in the City, Tony Blair said: "Labour is now the party for business — the entrepreneurs' champion." All the evidence now showed, he said, that business believed it could work with a Labour government.

Support for Labour came from 84 leaders of small firms in a letter to *The Times* yesterday, many of whom attended the Labour manifesto launch. Sarah McCartney, owner of a marketing consultancy, Little Max, told the launch: "Small business can look forward to a successful future with a Labour government."

Gerry Robinson, chairman of Granada, praised Labour's "repositioning" on business as "brilliant", and said: "I can say confidently that business can do business with new Labour. That in my view is one of the healthiest changes in British politics for a very long time." Tim Waterstone, founder of the Waterstone book chain, said: "Labour is good for government, good for business and good for Britain."

Away from the launch, Adair Turner, Director-General of the Confederation of British Industry, said it was "welcome confirmation" of many of Labour's shifts towards

business. The CBI still opposed key policies such as the windfall tax and union recognition, but welcomed Labour's stance on macroeconomic stability, the PFI and personal taxation. Ruth Lea, policy head at the Institute of Directors, said: "There is much in it that we can agree with, particularly on macroeconomic stability", although the IoD remained concerned about its public finance targets, the minimum wage and signing the social chapter. But she added: "It's quite incredible how far they have come since the early 1980s when there really was an antipathy to business."

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP

### GrandMet lines up European disposals

GRAND METROPOLITAN, the food and drinks group, is negotiating the sale of Brossard, its bakery business in France and Italy, to Sara Lee, the American food group. The sale, which should be finalised within the next two to three weeks, is part of the restructuring of GrandMet's European food business. The aim is to concentrate on main brands, comprising Pillsbury, Green Giant, Häagen-Dazs and Old El Paso. GrandMet and Sara Lee are to meet French union officials to discuss the impact the move will have on jobs. The sale of the businesses, with turnover of about £92 million last year, is expected to raise about £20 million. Brossard supplies cakes to the French retail market under the Brossard, Gringoire, Savane and Lenotre brand names. It employs about 670 people at three sites in France. Its Italian business, which trades as Fida, also supplies cakes and employs 120 people. Brossard would be managed as a separate unit by Sara Lee/DE. The Netherlands-based division of Sara Lee Corp.

### Rowlinson agrees bid

BARLOWS, the property investment and development group, has made an agreed £46.4 million bid for Rowlinson Securities, a rival building and property company. Barlows is offering 11 shares for every two Rowlinson shares, with a cash alternative of 320p a share. Barlows has irrevocable acceptances in respect of 90.3 per cent of Rowlinson. It is raising up to £5.58 million in a two-for-five rights issue to part-fund the deal. Barlow's pre-tax profits rose 57 per cent to £1.22 million for 1996. A final dividend of 1.55p makes a 2.3p (2p) total.

### Test for Antonov gears

SHARES in Antonov, developer of a new-style gearbox, set a 12-month high yesterday as the company confirmed progress in taking its product to market. Chrysler, the carmaker, is to test the gearbox in a prototype model of its Neon range. This could lead to a licensing deal, with Antonov on a 5 per cent royalty rate. Cajra, an Indian gearbox company, has also agreed to produce it. Antonov shares, suspended on Wednesday at 116.5p after jumping 24p, closed at 124p.

### Tyco to buy AT&T arm

TYCO INTERNATIONAL, the commercial and industrial manufacturer, has agreed to buy AT&T's undersea telecommunications cable business for about \$850 million. AT&T Submarine Systems makes undersea fiber optic telecommunication cable systems. Tyco, which manufactures disposable medical products, packaging materials, flow-control products and electrical and electronic components, took over ADT, the home security company, for \$5.4 billion last month.

### M&S man for Australia

MARKS & SPENCER, which plans to open its first outlet in Australia next year, yesterday announced the appointment of its first general manager there. The first task for Carl Oden, formerly a general manager in Birmingham who has been with the company for 32 years, is to find a local franchise partner to help M&S to expand in Australia. Jim McDonald, regional director for Asia Pacific, said the group plans to open initially in Sydney, followed by Melbourne and Brisbane.

### Great Portland expands

GREAT PORTLAND ESTATES has increased its presence in the West End of London by buying Ilex, a private property company, for £58.6 million. The deal, funded by £41.6 million in cash and £17 million in unsecured loan notes, gives Great Portland more exposure to Bond Street and other sites south of Oxford Street. Including property outside the capital, Ilex's annual rental income is £3.46 million net. Great Portland said this should rise to £4.2 million within 15 months.

### Gehe's AAH sells depot

UNITED DRUG, the pharmaceutical distribution company, is acquiring the Daniels depot of AAH, the UK subsidiary of Gehe of Germany for an undisclosed sum. The sale is the first step in a series of disposals demanded by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission as part of its conditional acceptance of Gehe's purchase of Lloyds Chemists. Under the terms of the MMC's agreement another six depots are to be sold.

## Lyonnaise and Suez take on the world

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

A FRENCH industrial giant was born yesterday when the utilities group, Lyonnaise des Eaux, confirmed plans to take over Cie de Suez, the holding company.

"Our mission is to conquer the world," said Jérôme Monod, 67, chairman of Lyonnaise. Both boards were meeting last night to agree details of the transaction.

The new conglomerate, which is to be called Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux, will be one of France's five biggest

companies, ahead of its immediate rivals, Générale des Eaux and Bouygues. It will focus on four core businesses — energy, water distribution, waste management and communications — and will be able to invest about Fr17 billion in its first year, M Monod said.

The combined group will have an annual turnover of about Fr180 billion and a stock market capitalisation of Fr75 billion.

The merger, which comes at a time when French industry is undergoing sweeping changes, is likely to pave the way for a shake-up in the utilities sector across Europe, including Britain. Lyonnaise owns three British water companies and also has interests in water treatment and waste management in the United Kingdom.

Analysts believe that the decision to focus on four core sectors could herald the sale of Lyonnaise's construction activities, along with the financial and industrial holdings controlled by Suez.

Suez, however, will hold on to its 63 per cent stake in Société Générale de Belgique, the Belgian holding company, which controls Tractebel, the energy and services giant. The deal ends the independence of Suez more than a century after it was set up to build and run the Suez canal. Gérard Mestrallet, Suez's chairman, pushed his cash-rich but directionless company into the merger after selling assets such as Indosuez, the investment bank, and its property portfolio. Lyonnaise needs Suez's financial muscle in order to expand abroad.

The two boards were expected to approve plans for Suez shareholders to receive 20 Lyonnaise shares for every 41 Suez shares held, as well as sharing special dividend of about Fr3.8 billion.

Although Suez is to be absorbed under a transaction designed to ensure that Lyonnaise need not renegotiate its local government contracts, Mestrallet, 48, seems likely to emerge as the main beneficiary. He was expected to be named as head of Suez-Lyonnaise des Eaux's executive board, with M Monod heading the supervisory council.

### Thor £1.3m court settlement

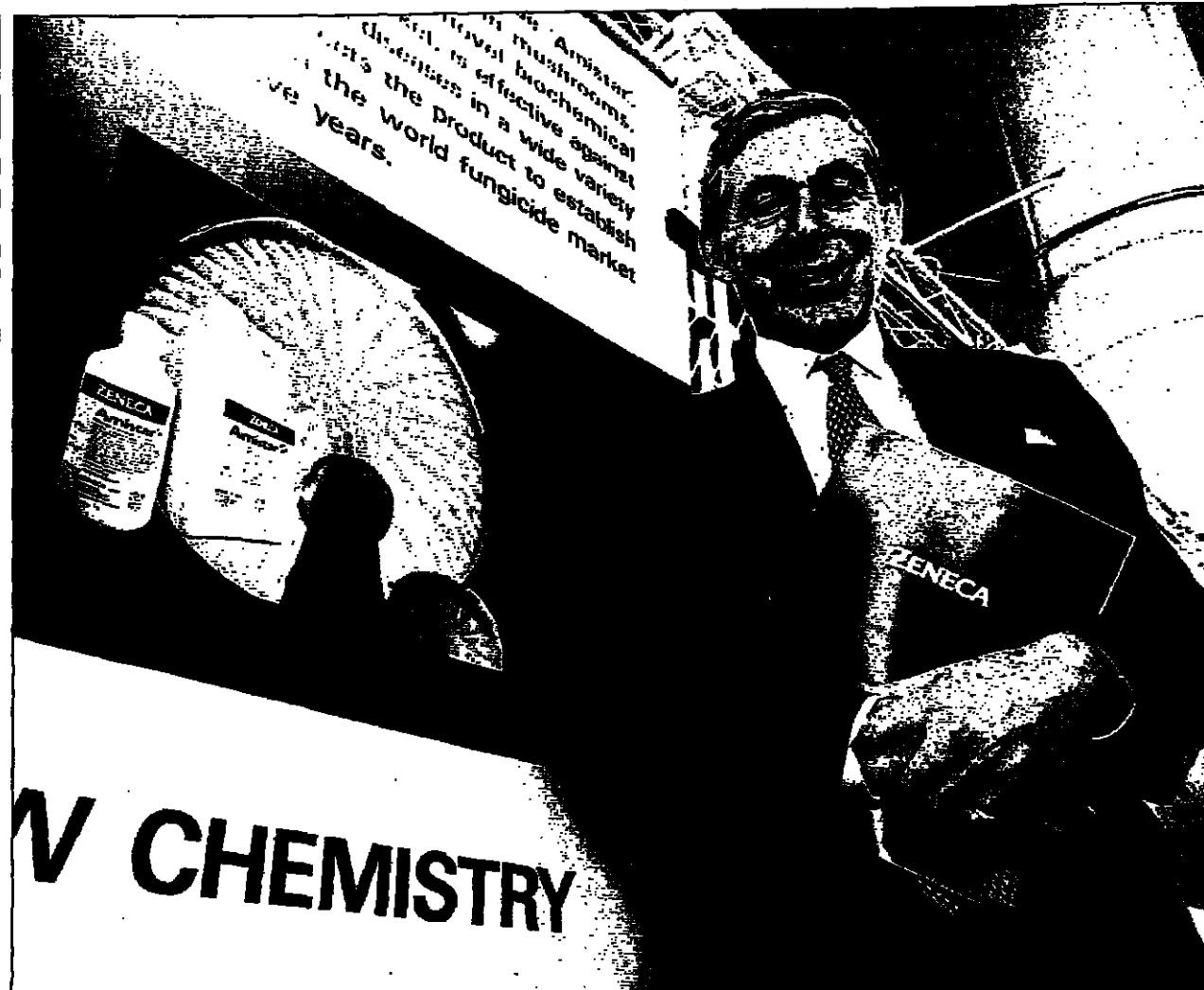
By FRANCES GIBB  
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

TWENTY South African workers yesterday accepted a £1.3 million settlement of their claims for damages and costs lodged in the High Court in London against Thor Chemical Holdings, a British multinational.

The workers, who were employed by a South African subsidiary of Thor, were poisoned by mercury at the company's plant in Cato Ridge in Natal. Four died and a number are severely disabled. The individual damages range up to £100,000.

Albert Dlamini, 30, who received £100,000 and who walks on crutches, said: "Working for Thor has destroyed my life. I feel very bitter that this British company has come to my country and adopted working practices that would never have been accepted in its own country. At least this settlement will allow me to live out the rest of my days in some sort of comfort."

Similar claims are being pursued against RTZ by a lung cancer victim who developed the disease after working in a uranium mine in Namibia and against Cape Asbestos by some South African victims of mesothelioma.



Sir David Barnes, head of Zeneca, which is fighting to defend patent protection on its Novalex anti-cancer drug

## US ruling lifts Zeneca's hopes

By ERIC RÉGULY

ZENECA has won a court victory that it believes will preserve American patent protection on a top anti-cancer drug for another five years. The announcement helped to lift Zeneca shares by 35p, to £18.51, within easy reach of their year high of £19.02.

The US Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit dismissed a challenge to Zeneca's patent on Novalex, the world's best-selling breast cancer treatment, staged by

Novopharm, a Canadian generic drugs company. The ruling affirmed a previous ruling in Zeneca's favour, made a year ago in a US district court in Maryland.

Zeneca, of which Sir David Barnes is chief executive, said that the appeal court dismissal will bolster its defences against two other Novalex challenges, by Pharmachemie BV and Mylan Pharmaceuticals. A third challenge, from Lemmon Company, has been dropped.

Zeneca now expects Novalex's US patent to remain

enforced until its scheduled expiry in 2002. The company was anxious to protect the drug because it has lost its patent protection in most European countries, including the United Kingdom.

Novalex is the trademark for tamoxifen citrate. Introduced in 1973, it was the first anti-oestrogen medicine designed to treat breast cancer; it can be effective in slowing the growth of tumours and, in some cases, causing them to shrink.

Novalex had sales in 1996 of £332 million, down 6 per

cent from the previous year, making it the second-biggest selling drug in Zeneca's anti-cancer portfolio, behind Zoladex. Novalex accounted for almost 14 per cent of Zeneca's total pharmaceutical sales.

Novalex does not have the market entirely to itself in the US. Tamoxifen, the generic form, is distributed there by Barr Laboratories, but the competition is somewhat artificial because Barr is a licensed distributor and the tamoxifen it sells is manufactured by Zeneca.

## Irish food firms planning £2.5bn dairy processor

FROM EILEEN MCCABE  
IN DUBLIN

SIX YEARS after merger talks between two of the Republic of Ireland's leading food companies broke down, Avonmore and Waterford are to discuss creating the country's biggest dairy processor.

The new company would have annual sales of about £12.5 billion. It would control 34 per cent of the liquid milk pool in the Republic and would have a dominant position in the liquid milk market, particularly in Dublin.

In the UK the new company would control 370 million gallons of milk, or about 15 per cent of the liquid milk pool. With Avonmore's extensive US operations, the global milk pool would be about 950 million gallons.

The Avonmore and Waterford farmer co-operatives own more than 60 per cent of the respective companies so any deal would have to be put to their members.

Waterford yesterday rushed out its controversial 1996 results, showing a 21 per cent fall in pre-tax profit to Ir£20 million, with earnings per share down 33 per cent to Ir£6.3p. Less than a month ago the company angered the Irish stock exchange and local stockbrokers when it issued a profits warning. Avonmore, based in neighbouring Kilkenny, boasted a 14 per cent increase in annual pre-tax profit to Ir£36 million in its statement last month.

## Members of A&L set to hold shares

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

THE vast majority of the Alliance & Leicester's 2.2 million members have decided to keep their shares in certificate form when the society floats on April 21.

City sources say that up to 70 per cent of members have chosen certificates, the traditional form of share ownership, rather than keep them in the society's electronic nominee account or sell them via its free dealing service. Qualifying members are receiving a flat-rate allocation of 250 shares, worth about £1,000.

Holding the certificate allows A&L members to transfer their shares within 42 days into a personal equity plan. However, such a high level of member interest has revived fears that both Crest, the Stock Exchange's paperless trading system, and Pep managers' administration systems will not cope with the demand.

Sell or hold, page 31

## Minet sold to Aon of Chicago

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

MINET, the loss-making London insurer owned by St Paul Companies, has been sold to Aon Corporation of Chicago for a sum believed to be in the region of \$40 million. Minet, which employs 3,000 people in London, will form

part of Aon's global insurance brokerage and consulting business. Under the deal's terms Aon will not assume liabilities from Minet over policies, some of which date back to the 1960s.

Aon is believed to have outbid March & McLennan, the world's biggest insurance

broker, which had been in talks with St Paul.

Minet incurred a \$13 million loss on income of \$370 million in 1995. St Paul has been looking for a buyer since October when it announced that the sale was likely to result in a pre-tax loss of \$250 million.

### The Queen's Award for Export, Technological and Environmental Achievement 1997



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THE TIMES

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### TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.18	2.00
Austria Sch	20.53	19.03
Belgium Fr	60.42	55.82
Canada \$	2.274	2.204
Cyprus Cyp£	0.884	0.804
Denmark Kr	11.15	10.38
Finland Mk\$	8.15	8.15
France Fr	9.80	8.10
Germany Dm	2.94	2.72
Greece Dr	455	427
Hong Kong \$	13.20	12.20
Iceland Iskr	127	107
Ireland P£	1.10	1.02
Israel Shk	5.78	5.13
Italy Lira	2500	2700
Japan Yen	216.10	202.10
Malta	0.855	0.601
Netherlands Gld	3.218	3.048
New Zealand \$	2.48	2.28
Norway Kr	11.01	11.01
Portugal Esc	200.50	270.50
Spain Ptas	7.22	7.02
South Africa Rand	245.50	225.50
Sweden Kr	13.24	12.24
Switzerland Fr	2.51	2.33
Turkey Lira	2190.00	2050.00
USA \$	1.720	1.590

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates are at close of trading yesterday.

### THE SUNDAY TIMES Mark the Midas man

"Sir Mark Weinberg hardly slept on Tuesday night — not, on this occasion, because of a society event where he is frequently to be found with his glamorous wife Anouska Hempel. This late night was a strictly business affair. After 35 years in the life insurance industry, Weinberg is now chairing his own publicly-quoted financial services company, scooping £13m in the process..."

Business — *The Sunday Times* tomorrow

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CHANGING TIMES



## A WORKING WEEK FOR: PAUL STREETER

## Playing host to millennium merry-makers

Wembley Arena's director is well advanced with his party plans and intends to make it a night to remember, says Jon Ashworth

Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday

ON New Year's Eve 1999, fashionable revellers will be flocking to Wembley, the sport and entertainment complex in northwest London. Thousands of merry-makers are set to pay £250 each for the chance to party the night away, although the precise line-up has yet to be decided. Tickets will be scarce.

The great irony is that the revelries will centre not on Wembley Stadium, scene of Euro 96 triumphs and pop pyrotechnics, but on its smaller sibling, Wembley Arena. Through a cruel twist of timing, the stadium will be closed for construction, pending its genesis into the new National Stadium. The mantle passes to Wembley Arena, reducing capacity at the millennium rave-up from 80,000 to fewer than 12,000. At £250 per ticket, that's a lot of wasted millions.

One man is only too delighted to see the responsibility fall on his shoulders. Paul Streeter, director of Wembley Arena, is well advanced with plans for the evening, only 30 months away, and intends to make it an event to remember. "One of the problems is finding people to work on the night," he says. "It's not far away now. I'd love to see 10,000 people in here paying quite a lot of money per head to celebrate."

The clean-up team on January 1, 2000 is likely to find it heavy going. I arrive to interview Streeter, 47, on the morning after a sell-out concert by Michael Jackson's cousins, and the enthusiasm of the fans has taken its toll. The stage, looking down on a sea of orange chairs, is strewn with empty mineral water bottles. Rubbish chokes the aisles.

Streeter, who arrived at Wembley two years ago, takes the problem in his stride. A former computer salesman, he has a job many star-struck teenagers would kill for, regularly meeting famous pop stars, and enjoying an endless round of live concerts. Diana Ross and INXS are among forthcoming acts.

About 1.5 million people visited the Arena last year, lining the coffers of Wembley plc, the quoted parent company. Operating profits at the Wembley complex increased to £14.1 million (£9.2 million) in the year to December 31, of which nearly £2 million came from the Arena.

Non-music events in 1996 included the Horse of the Year Show, the Budweiser Basketball Championships, *Gladiators*, and *Disney World on Ice*. Oliver McCall floored Lennox Lewis and *Lord of the Dance* packed in the crowds.

Streeter is one of three executives responsible for Wembley's main areas of business — the Stadium, the Arena, and conferences and exhibitions — and he takes his job very seriously. "I get really proud," he says, guiding me towards the

backstage dressing rooms. "This is my building. After a couple of years, it still gives me a real kick."

He takes a hand in negotiations with pop promoters such as Harvey Goldsmith, but leaves most of the work to his sales and marketing team. A second team deals with the operational and technical side. The logistics are daunting, with on-site parking for 7,000 cars, and 150 stewards and security staff. Running the food and beverage outlets keeps a further 70 people busy.

Streeter is there in the background, handing on-the-day control to one of four event managers. Staff work to a general instruction — or GI — that charts every point of an event down to the minute. Streeter says: "You've got to plan it like a military campaign. Generally, it runs like clockwork."

The huddleball is far removed from Wembley's origins as a leafy destination for Victorian day-trippers. In 1889, Sir Edward Watkin, the chairman of the Metropolitan Railway, dreamt up a scheme featuring football and cricket pitches, and a running track, backed up with fountains, waterfalls and flower beds.

The centrepiece was to be a 350-metre four-legged tower, similar to the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The money ran out after just 61 metres, and Watkin's folly remained a tourist attraction until it was demolished in 1907.

With the ending of the Great War, plans were put in hand for a British Empire Exhibition, with the Empire Stadium at its heart. The venue went on to host successive sporting events, including the 1948 Olympic Games. Wembley Arena started life in 1934 as an enormous swimming pool, including a wave machine and other innovations.

It survived as such until the late Fifties when the building was adapted for the concerts that were becoming all the rage. The pool was filled with triangular supports and covered.

Early sell-outs included the All Star Record Show of March 1959, with a line-up including Penula Clark, Shirley Bassey, Lonnie Donegan and Vera Lynn. In April 1964, Wembley Arena featured the Beatles and the Rolling Stones on the same billing — rare enough, even then. The Dave Clark Five and the Hollies were among others at the *NME* poll-winners' event.

One name from back then, the Monkees, recently returned to Wembley Arena after an absence of 30 years. The critics were not kind, but Streeter, a self-confessed fan, was ecstatic. "It was my sort of era," he concedes. "It was tremendous having them here after all these years." The group mingled with VIPs and well-wishers at the Silvermint, the Arena's backstage watering hole.

Streeter cannot compete with Wembley Stadium when it comes to the headline summer acts — Michael Jackson and U2



Paul Streeter views the Wembley Arena as his building and says that even after a couple of years as director there it still gives him a real kick

are among this year's draws — but wins in terms of year-round consistency. The Arena is an all-weather venue that can be screened off to seat 4,500, creating a more intimate atmosphere. That said, there is no shortage of competition. Earls Court is the bigger London indoor venue, seating 20,000, but tends to hold no more than two or three shows a year.

The NEC in Birmingham has a similar line-up of artists, but tends to feature fewer shows. Big-name acts like to round off their UK tour by "playing Wembley". The big draws last year included Tina Turner, who played six nights at the Arena and two at the Stadium, pulling in 220,000 people. Streeter shows me the backstage room where the star relaxed before the show — a rather dowdy affair, with two dubious-looking sofas, and a hi-fi and television set.

One well-known rocker complained that the CD player was broken, only to discover that he had put the disc in the wrong way up.

Streeter's working week is not made easier by the fact that he lives near Croydon in south London. He is in the office by 7.30 most mornings, beating the traffic, and often stays late to take in the shows. "I like to be here when an event's

on. It's my building. The hours are long, but I still get a real buzz from it." He tends to have little to do with the stars. "We tend not to meet them too often," he says. "A lot of them come straight offstage and depart." Dealing with the masses of screaming girls is someone else's problem. "The artists bring their own security in for back stage. They prefer to work with people they know."

Hiring the Arena typically costs £27,000 to £30,000 a day, although the management may opt instead for a percentage of the gross box office take. The cost is reduced for block

bookings. Rentals brought in just over £3 million last year. Pop concerts and sporting events are just part of a wider picture. Streeter sees a profitable sideline in annual general meetings and other special events.

Abbey National and others frequently reserve the Arena as a back-up venue, while BT is due at Wembley for next week's vote on the proposed MCI deal.

Perhaps the most unusual booking of all involved the Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), which collapsed in 1991 with debts of \$10 billion.

Christopher Morris of Deloitte & Touche, joint liquidator of BCCI, booked the venue for a creditors' meeting in May 1993, and was slightly miffed when only 600 of the 38,000 BCCI creditors bothered

to turn up. Wembley was chosen last year as the preferred location for a new National Stadium. The Sports Council has set aside £120 million in National Lottery funding towards the project and work is now proceeding on the design aspects — knock it down and build a new one, incorporating the famous Wembley towers, or refurbish the existing structure.

As it is, the millennium revellers may well encounter a very different Arena when they turn up for the big night. Streeter is seeking to "sell" the name, in the same way that Pepsi took on the Trocadero, and Labatt, the Canadian brewer, linked with the former Hammer-smith Odeon in west London.

The successful sponsor will pay up to £1 million a year to see its name in lights.

## HIDDEN ASSETS

## Prosperity can show its face as restoration is completed

Number One Princes Street, situated at one of the most important junctions of the City, will be officially back in business next week after a £20 million makeover. Overlooking the Bank of England, the Royal Exchange and Mansion House, the 1920s NatWest building has at last been restored to its former glory.

Working like worms in an apple from the inside out, with permission to park only a single lorry outside the Grade II listed building at any one time, it took two-and-a-half years to complete the refurbishment. After two world wars and a bomb at Bank Underground station in 1941, the programme tied in neatly with a need to modernise the offices and recapture the original charm of the building designed by Sir Edwin

Morag Preston enjoys a preview of a £20m refurbishment by NatWest

Cooper. Ranked among the top three of NatWest's portfolio of 3,000 properties, the Portland stone building stands on the site of a former Union Bank of London building, dating to 1844.

An intricate web of huge steel girders kept the facade in place as the interior of the building was completely gutted. Only the banking hall and original dome, standing at the core of the building, were suspended in place as the top two storeys were temporarily removed. Through two winters and more than one Lord Mayor's Show, the key site lay wholly exposed to the elements. The Portland stone exterior was

scrubbed down, unsightly safety rails were removed, and Ernest Gillick's corner sculpture of Britannia, flanked by Higher and Lower Mathematics, was repaired. Customers walking into the fan-shaped banking hall will see a re-creation of Sir Edwin's original designs, gleaned from his surviving plans and photographs. The Sixties brown and yellow decor was totally ripped out, replaced with features lost over time. Fine bronze and glazed screens, 1930s light fittings, art deco grills and missing parts of the plaster ceiling have all been reinstated. A team of designers scoured Italy in search of

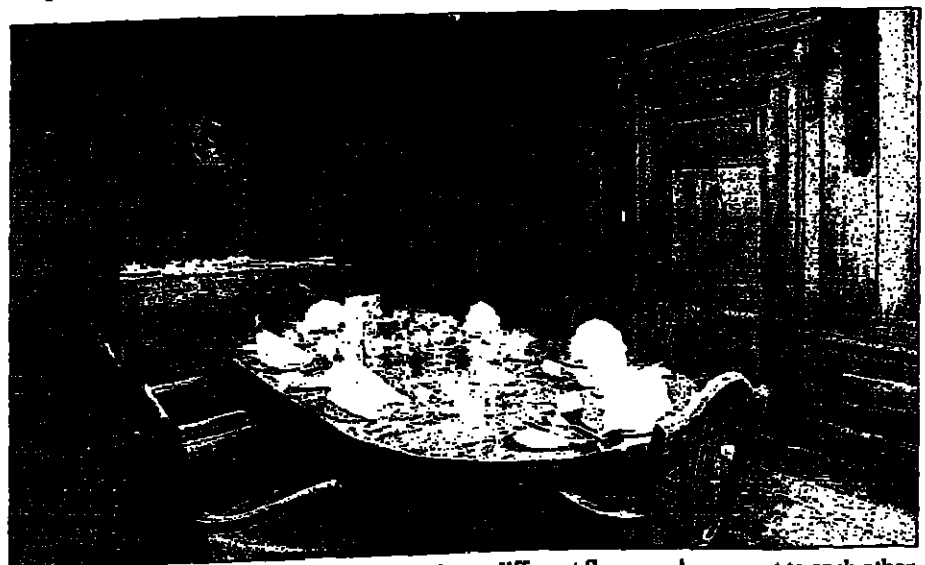
marble tiles to match the existing few that cover the floor, and the vast dome was repainted to Sir Edwin's original white colour scheme.

Integrity and Prosperity, the bronze statues by Charles Dorman, situated in the tiny corner of the hall that served as a clue to its original design, were covered in plywood during the refurbishment.

The existing upper floors, cellularised into small offices, and designed to accommodate the banking needs of the Thirties, have been rebuilt to allow greater flexibility. The additional accommodation has provided more room for both staff and IT equipment in the 12-storey building.

Three oak-panelled rooms, previously on different upper floors, have been brought together on the first floor and linked by a thoughtfully designed corridor. Each one different in shape, they will serve as somewhere for the bank to entertain. The Overseas Managers' Room has been rebuilt in its original location, including the recreation of the plaster ceiling and the removal of later side tables. The deep red carpets that cover the floor were specially commissioned to reflect the details in the banking hall below.

Mike Dooling, of T P Bennett, the architect, says the worst stage was demolishing the existing building, and tying it in with the new structure, building from the bottom upwards. While digging into virgin earth, he says, taking the building 1.5m deeper, they rather overzealously made a hole through to Bank Underground station near by.



One of three oak-panelled rooms previously on different floors and now next to each other

## Thought for the day

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STOCK MARKET

CLARE STEWART

# Railtrack pulls ahead to touch trading high

RAILTRACK provided some much needed interest on an otherwise uninspiring day of trading, when most FT-SE 100 stocks were seeing red by the close.

Diminishing concern over the impact of a Labour windfall tax and a brighter view on prospects for privatised groups helped it to touch a trading high of 454p, although it ended at 441p, up 11½p.

There was also talk of buying interest from a US institution, which helped to boost prices in Railtrack's tightly held stock.

The spectre of a rise in US interest rates loomed large again after the publication of higher than forecast prices data. Wall Street's swift reaction on opening pulled back London shares, reversing the morning's modest gains.

By the close the FT-SE 100 was 42.5 points down at 4270.7 after what dealers described as poor volumes of just under 700 million.

Second-liners proved more buoyant than FT-SE 100 stocks in yesterday's choppy trading conditions. Among FT-SE 250 companies enjoying good rises was AEA Technology, which in line with rises enjoyed by other utilities rose 20p to 500p, a jump of more than 4 per cent.

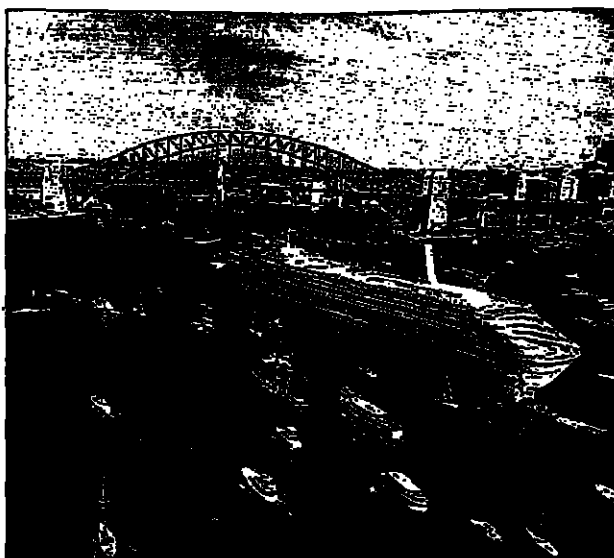
Biocompatibles soared to a new high on further consideration of its plans to launch a new contact lens in the US. The shares rose 45p to £14.20.

Misys, the computer software group, added 30p to £120p, on talk of the high costs companies face reprogramming computers to cope with the millennium.

WS Atkins, the engineering consultancy, jumped 1½p to 31½p on news that it had won new business from the Ministry of Defence.

Elsewhere, United Utilities slid back from earlier gains, but closed up 4½p at 674½p. However, Thames Water, criticised in a recent report for high levels of water leakage, dipped 4½p to 675p. National Power ended its recent run, sliding 1½p lower to 525½p. PowerGen fell 5½p to 628p.

Zeneca was in robust form as shares jumped 35p to £18.51. The pharmaceutical group has held on to its exclusive rights to Novoladex, a treatment for breast cancer, after seeing off a challenge by Novopharm. Glaxo retreated from its best levels and closed 13p lower at £10.95.



Shares of P&O, which runs the liner *Oriana*, fell 14p

while SmithKline Beecham ended 15p lower at 902½p.

Among smaller drugs groups, Scotia fell 20p to 415p on profit-taking, while Cortes International, which has attracted interest recently, ended 7½p lower at 232½p. SkyePharma added 5p to 75p after recent presentations to analysts. BG rallied to put on 2½p to 181½p in busy trading.

Food retailers wobbled, after recent gains, on figures from John Lewis showing a 2.6 per cent fall in food sales in the week to April 5. Tesco ended 6½p lower at 357½p, while Sainsbury dropped 8p to 354½p. Asda, which was in demand earlier in the week, ended ½p lower at 110½p, with Sainsbury off 5½p to 330p.

while Centrica was unchanged at 594p.

Shell motored ahead early in the day after two broker recommendations, but ended 4p lower at £10.59½. BP also fell back, closing 8p lower at 687½p. Barmah Control was in demand after encouraging comments from brokers. The shares came off, however, in the afternoon to end 14p lower at 997½p. British Borneo, the oil exploration group, recovered further ground lost after

a recent disappointing drilling report and rose 28½p to £13.98½.

BOC, the industrial gases group, fell 2½p to 919p. News of an explosion at its South London plant was said to have affected sentiment, but it is not expected to make an impact on profits. Much of the drop in was attributed to a broker downgrade. BT was encour-

aged higher on the promise of greater freedom to offer entertainment services on its network under Labour, as well as expectations of EU approval of the company's deal with MCI. By the close, however, the shares were trading 1p lower at 441½p.

Unigate and Dairy Crest, the food groups, both nudged higher on positive talk. ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, was advising a switch from high-yielding food stock

on concerns that a Labour government would reduce or abolish tax credits on dividends.

Unigate added 4½p to 464p while Dairy Crest put on 3½p to 209p.

Shortage of stock and talk of bid interest from Siebe, pushed Spirax-Sarco, the engineering group, 25p higher to 702½p. Siebe dropped 26p to 956½p.

Celsis International, the healthcare group that makes diagnostic and monitoring systems, moved up from its low this year of 103½p to add 4p. Whispers that Celsis will have good news to report next month could fuel further rises.

Banner Homes climbed to a new high for the year after an encouraging profits forecast. The shares added 1½p to 81½p. Hambro Countrywide rose 3½p to 130p in response to a recent housing market survey.

Rowlinson Securities, the property group, jumped 30p to 312½p after an agreed offer from Barlows. The £46.37 million offer values Rowlinson shares at 371½p. Shares in Barlows fell 4p to 63½p.

Among the top 100 shares Royal Bank of Scotland was left nursing a 19½p drop to 530p, a fall of more than 3 per cent. US influences were blamed for a 9½p fall to 271p for Vodafone while Tomkins dropped 9½p to 170p.

F&G fell 14p to 602½p after profit forecasts were downgraded by BZW, the broker.

Waterford Foods jumped 10p to 95p after the announcement of a bid approach from Avonmore Foods. Grand Metropolitan ended 2p lower at 499½p after the disposal of Broadland, a subsidiary, to Sara Lee, the US group.

WH Smith ended 2p lower at 451½p after the surprise departure of Peter Bamford, head of WH Smith retail. GILT-EDGED: Gilts mirrored equities as higher morning trading was hit by the Wall Street fall. The June series of the long gilt ended at 1081½p, down 1½p on higher volumes than were seen earlier in the week at 70,000.

Treasury 8 per cent 2000 ended off ½p at 102½p, while at the longer end, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 was off ½p at 101½p.

NEW YORK: US stocks were sharply lower in early trading. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 77.11 points to 6,462.94.

## MAJOR INDICES

New York:  
Dow Jones 6462.94 (-77.11)  
S&P Composite 747.06 (-11.28)

Tokyo:  
Nikkei Average 17846.06 (-361.23)

Hong Kong:  
Hang Seng 12316.00 (-157.90)

Amsterdam:  
BOE Index 774.38 (-4.09)  
AO 2380.5 (-12.4)

Sydney:  
DAX 3340.05 (-11.44)

Frankfurt:  
DAX 2068.48 (-18.79)

Brussels:  
General 11832.9 (-31.74)

Paris:  
CAC-40 2574.56 (-33.41)

Zurich:  
SIX 965.00 (Same)

London:  
FT 30 2820.0 (-33.4)  
FTSE 100 4270.7 (-42.5)  
FTSE 250 2141.8 (-14.88)  
FTSE 350 2107.5 (-17.6)

FTSE Eurotrack 100 2170.87 (+0.73)  
FTSE All-share 2079.82 (-15.88)  
FTSE 100 Share 2141.8 (-14.88)  
FTSE Fixed Interest 116.47 (-0.16)  
FTSE Govt Secs 93.40 (-0.14)

Burgundy 45216  
SEAG Volume 2568.6  
US 1.6257 (+0.0015)  
German Mark 2.8019 (+0.0048)  
Exchange Index 98.7 (+0.05)  
Bank of England official cash 4.90m

LECU 1.6286  
LSOR 1.6286  
155.0 Jan 2.78% Jan 1997-100  
154.5 Feb 2.78% Jan 1997-100

RECENT ISSUES

Aurora Inv Trust 100  
Avalon Oil 89p  
Avis Europe 129p  
Bickerton 41p  
Cambridge Amby 57p  
Charlton Athletic 60p  
Close Bros Prot VCT 95  
Diagonal 321p  
Donatantonio 72p  
Harvey Nash 20p  
Hillier & Smith 21p  
Helfire Group 115  
Murray VCT 2 (100) 102p  
Newcastle Ltd 136  
Northstar Secs 28p  
Oxford Tech Venture 95  
Painfinder Properties 37p  
Prestbury Leisure 21p  
Q Group 115p  
Sibir Energy 16p  
Torch Hides 107p  
United Overseas Grp 60p  
Whitehead Mann 145p  
Wordsec 177

RIGHTS ISSUES

Bloore n/p (9) 22p  
Edge Props n/p (115) 13p  
GEC n/p (130) 5p  
Laminar n/p (120) 4p  
Saville Gordon n/p (55) 4p

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:  
AIA Tech 500p (+20p)  
Prohibition 510p (+28p)  
Polly 505p (+18p)

FALLS:  
Channing 190p (-10p)  
Scania 415p (-20p)  
Hyl Bk Scot 530p (-19p)  
Argos 645p (-20p)  
RMC Gp 968p (-30p)  
Danka Bk Sys 480p (-15p)  
Siebe 956p (-28p)  
Pizzagroup 675p (-18p)  
Pizzagroup 675p (-18p)  
BOC 919p (-21p)  
Com Union 853p (-13p)

Closing Prices Page 45

## TEMPUS

### Making allowances

HOW will Labour tax business if it wins the election? So far, the City is mulling over three changes. One is certain, the utility tax. The second is probable, an increase in capital allowances to promote investment and the third is possible, the abolition of the dividend tax credit — an easy way of collecting £4 billion. The general view is that Labour will milk the corporate sector to pay for its pledge on personal taxation but Labour could be more radical. It may introduce changes that turn the financing of business on its head.

Labour believes that British companies reinvest too little of their profits and pay out too much in dividends. Increasing the tax allowance on investment in plant and equipment is an obvious step but Labour could go further and adopt proposals by the Institute for Fiscal Studies to change the cost

of capital for industry. Currently, debt receives a tax subsidy in the form of an allowance against the cost of borrowing. It is an incentive for companies to gear their balance sheets and the consequence has been debt-financed share buybacks and special dividends. Instead, Labour could either remove the allowance against interest payments — a move that would be unpopular as it would hurt small businesses — or, it could introduce a tax allowance for equity, applied to share capital and retained earnings.

The latter has attractions but as Dresdner Kleinwort Benson points out, it could change the shape of the stock market, penalising high-yielding, heavily borrowed low-growth companies while subsidising high-growth companies that reinvest their profits. Another tax on the utilities?

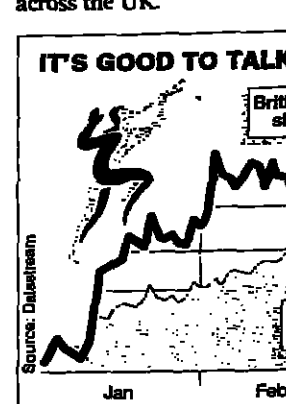
### British Telecom

FOR YEARS, British Telecom complained that cable companies were offered the right to use their networks for telephone services as an incentive to invest more than £10 billion in their networks. It would be costly and foolish for BT to replicate the cable infrastructure across the UK.

BT could soon get its revenge. Labour said yesterday that it will lift BT's broadcasting restrictions if it wins the election, and the prospect of the company's imminent entry into a vast new business helped to lift the shares. But BT investors should scale back expectations of untold riches to come. Its network, comprised mostly of copper wires, lacks the capacity to handle multichannel television, video-on-demand and high-speed Internet access. Building a nationwide network would cost £15 billion — more than it is

paying to buy MCL, America's second largest long-distance carrier.

The fledgling cable companies were offered the right to use telephone services as an incentive to invest more than £10 billion in their networks. It would be costly and foolish for BT to replicate the cable infrastructure across the UK.



### WH Smith

NO ONE expected WH Smith's retail managing director to quit, but then again, no one was entirely surprised. The high street shops are at the heart of the group, but are also its biggest headache. However good a job the incumbent is doing, the temptation to throw somebody new at the problem is irresistible.

However, the new head of the division should, in theory, have an easier job. The railway and airport shops and the distribution and logistics business are being set up as separate divisions, so a successor can concentrate on the high street.

On the other hand, Smith's insists that the change in management does not signal a change in strategy. Also, Bill Cockburn, chief executive, has appointed himself chairman of the retail board and wants to keep a closer eye on the retail side.

This would all be fine if it

were clear that the current strategy is the right one, but it is not. The new boss should be able to question and even overturn recent decisions to bring in children's areas and cut the number of books, for example. WH Smith needs a retailer of calibre and character to run the high street shops, not a yes man. Shareholders should hope the group chooses the former.

### NMT

RESOURCEFUL people, the Scots. From the country that gave the world Adam Smith, penicillin and television, a new invention is on its way to the Alternative Investment Market: the retractable safety syringe.

At first sight, the device compares poorly with Scotland's other inventions: it looks like little more than a spring-tipped needle inside a ball-point pen. However, to its owner, New Medical Technology — it is the future of the \$3 billion worldwide

syringe market. Its technology is beautifully simple. The needle retracts instantly after injection, thus protecting health workers from accidental pinpricks and avoiding the subsequent compensation claims against hospitals.

Now, why didn't you think of that? Unfortunately, the company is not certain that nobody else has, although it is reasonably confident. While speculative wing-and-a-prayer companies are no stranger to the junior exchange, NMT has yet to obtain patent protection.

It makes no secret of this absence; indeed, it gives warning that companies with "greater research, development, marketing, financial and personal resources" may get in before it.

Whatever NMT may lack in protection for its invention, investors cannot complain that the company has not protected them from a risky investment decision.

EDITED BY CARL MORTSHED

### MOVERS OF THE WEEK

Current price	Week's change	Notes
Zeneca 1851p	+111p	News on drug patent
COMMISSION 1851p	+88p	Results, new projects
Next 851p	+23p	Buyout sector
Biocompatibles 1420p	+222p	US product launch
Priam Rail 830p	+25p	Report on franchises
Universal Salvage 520p	+20p	Profits warning
Diamond 545p	+26p	Cellnet joint venture
Tarmac 113p	+9p	Recent results
London Clubs 398p	-10p	Bid returned

### COMMODITIES

Commodity	Price	Change
COCOA	1015-1020	Jul 1053-1060
Jul 1020-1025	Sep 1060-1065	
Dec 1025-1030	Mar 1065-1070	
Dec 1030-1035	Jul 1070-1075	
Dec 1035-1040	Jul 1075-1080	
Dec 1040-1045	Jul 1080-1085	

Commodity	Price	Change
ROBUSTA COFFEE	156-158	Jul 1595-1600
Jul 158-160	Sep 1600-1605	
Sep 160-162	Mar 1605-1610	
Sep 162-164	Jul 1610-1615	
Sep 164-166	Jul 1615-1620	
Sep 166-168	Jul 1620-1625	

Commodity	Price	Change
WHITE SUGAR (FOB)	311-313	Jul 304-306
Jul 311-313	Sep 306-308	
Jul 313-315	Mar 308-310	
Jul 315-317	Jul 310-312	
Jul 317-319	Jul 312-314	
Jul 319-321	Jul 314-316	

Commodity	Price	Change
MEAT & LIVESTOCK	1015-1020	Jul 1053-1060
Jul 1020-1025	Sep 1060-1065	
Dec 1025-1030	Mar 1065-1070	
Dec 1030-1035	Jul 1070-1075	
Dec 1035-1040	Jul 1075-1080	
Dec 1040-1045	Jul 1080-1085	

Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
Jul 1.20-1.22	Jul 1.25-1.27	

Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
Jul 1.20-1.22	Jul 1.25-1.27	

Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
Jul 1.20-1.22	Jul 1.25-1.27	

Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
Jul 1.20-1.22	Jul 1.25-1.27	

Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
Jul 1.20-1.22	Jul 1.25-1.27	

Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
Jul 1.20-1.22	Jul 1.25-1.27	

Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
Jul 1.20-1.22	Jul 1.25-1.27	

Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
Jul 1.20-1.22	Jul 1.25-1.27	

Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
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Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
Jul 1.20-1.22	Jul 1.25-1.27	

Commodity	Price	Change
ICEBERG LETTUCE	1.10-1.12	Jul 1.15-1.17
Jul 1.12-1.14	Sep 1.17-1.19	
Jul 1.14-1.16	Mar 1.19-1.21	
Jul 1.16-1.18	Jul 1.21-1.23	
Jul 1.18-1.20	Jul 1.23-1.25	
Jul 1.20-1.22	Jul 1.25-1.27	

Commodity	Price	Change
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## WIDOWS' PIQUE 33

War widows are angry at pension rules

## WEEKEND MONEY

## PENSION TENSION 37

The frozen pension that melted away



THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

Caroline Merrell looks at the detail of the flotation

# Halifax clear for market landing

The Halifax took a step nearer the stock market this week, with the announcement of arrangements for those who wish to sell some but not all of their shares or to buy more. As this will be a nominee-type account, investors will not get their own share certificates, leaving them without the traditional proof of ownership. However, each account holder will receive regular notification of the value of his holding and will have his dividends paid into this account.

Sue Concannon, Halifax Share Dealing, managing director, said it eventually hopes to offer more services through the share-dealing operation. She added: "Members will be able to transfer other shares to the Shareholder Account, which will be free for at least three years."

Those who do not want to hold their shares in this way can apply to have share certificates. They can also keep their shares in a single-company personal equity plan (Pep). If the shares are held in the single-company Pep, then the member can invest the other £5,000 of their general Pep allowance with another Pep manager. As the shares are deemed to have no transfer value, they can also invest a further £3,000 in Halifax shares, and benefit from the breaks on a single company Pep (see page 32). Ms Concannon added: "Single-company Peps may not be suitable for everyone. Non-taxpayers or those on a lower rate of tax may not benefit from taking out this sort of Pep."

If share certificates are opted for, then the member will not be able to use the Halifax share dealing services. Instead, they will have to go through another broker. Sharelink, the execution-only broker, charges a minimum of £10 on its nominee account. As its flotation date of April 21 is less than ten days away, the 2.4 million members of the Alliance & Leicester should have now decided whether to sell their shares, put them in a Pep, or the corporate nominee account or opt to have their own share certificates. The shares of those who missed yesterday's deadline for returning allocation forms will be held with the society awaiting instructions.

## SHOULD YOU SELL OR HOLD?

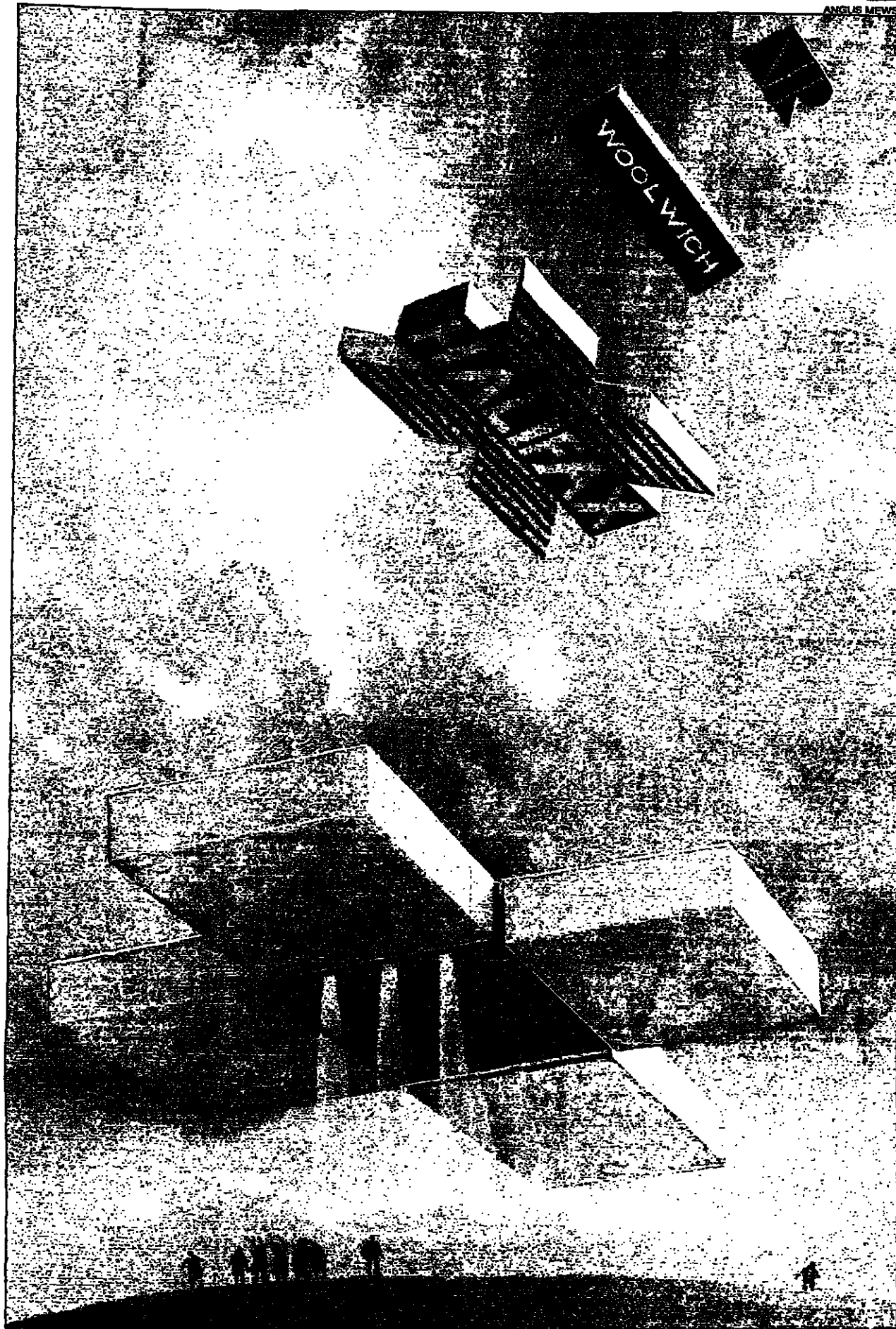
Brokers advised those with Alliance & Leicester shares to hang on to them, unless they had debts or other outstanding financial commitments. For example, the interest on the outstanding credit card bill, which rings up at about 23 per cent, is unlikely to be matched by any return that could be generated by the Alliance & Leicester. The small number of shares allocated may not be cost-effective to hold.

Jeremy Batstone, of Nat West Stockbrokers, thinks A&L shares will be worth keeping because the society could be taken over. "The likelihood of the Alliance & Leicester surviving as an independent entity is about as likely as a second lieutenant surviving the First World War," he said.

Societies that become banks are protected from takeover for five years, unless they themselves become predators. But Mr Batstone said that a company wishing to bid for the A&L could make a friendly approach to the board that might not be rebuffed.

He added that all converting societies could face difficulties. "They will not be able to offer the same savings and mortgage rates as the mutuals because they will have to satisfy their shareholders' needs." He said Abbey National's share of the mortgage market had fallen to 25 per cent this year against about 12.5 per cent last year.

WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth



In a week in which pension savings were made safer by new laws, (see page 38) a worrying trend in the management of pension funds was revealed. Pension fund trustees are supposed to have a wealth of options when choosing the manager of the money they guard. The selection is nicknamed "the beauty parade". City firms pose before them in a bid to show they are the financial equivalent of Miss Venezuela.

According to new research, however, the candidates are

## Beauty parade or City clone zone?

starting to look the same. Combined Actuarial Performance Services (Caps) analyses pension fund performance. In a new study, it said the difference between the better managers and their underperforming competitors was strikingly small in 1996.

Surveying 1,620 funds with a total value of £269 billion, Caps found the median average return was 10.8 per cent, against 19.6 per cent in 1995. However, just 2.2 per cent separated the typical "higher-performance" manager from the typical "lower-perfor-

mance" manager. The gap, known as the inter-quartile range, is the smallest since performance measurement began in 1970.

John Clamp, chief executive, said part of the explanation is consolidation in the pensions industry, which has seen five or six fund management companies become dominant. But Caps leaves the question dangling: are pension fund managers doing the same thing?

ADAM JONES

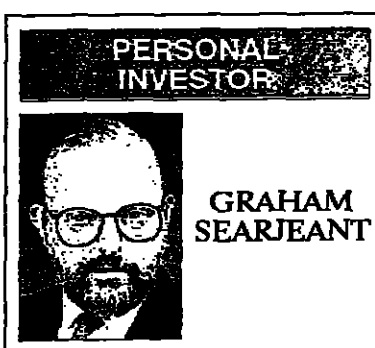
## A least-unfair utility tax

Labour's utility tax is an obsolete wheeze to grab privatisation proceeds without selling anything. On two occasions such a tax might have been justified. One was in 1991-92, when some utilities benefited from falling inflation because of the structure of price controls. Had Labour won in 1992, it could have pounced. By now, any gain has been drowned in all the water flowing under the regulatory bridge.

The second was in 1995-96, when takeover protection was lifted from electricity and water companies. The City demanded heavy cash payouts in addition to normal dividends from companies deemed able to borrow heavily, and there were big takeover premiums. Billions were disgorged that neither the selling Government, nor buying investors, had thought to be surplus at privatisation.

Kenneth Clarke could have pocketed £5 billion on that basis. He chose not to, because that would rewrite sales contracts on a one-way basis. Government offered no compensation for changing the law to the detriment of British Gas and confiscating a lot of its business.

Even the 1995-96 bonanza has swiftly become history. Nearly all regional electricity companies and two water groups have been taken over, mostly minus their surplus cash. It is cynical to pretend that a levy hurts boardroom fat-cats. Labour relies, however, on revenue from the only tax impost it has presented to the electorate. So a levy there would be. The issues are how much, who pays and on what basis. Inspired reports that



Tony Blair wants to levy "only" £3.5 billion sent City traders out buying on Thursday. That looks a dangerous game, though useful for those of us small investors who still want to sell. Utilities have some bargaining power, given the legal wrinkles of such a tax, but fiscal pressures on the next government grow by the minute.

The wider the levy is drawn, the less the individual pain and the less likely it is to suffer legal challenge. This is the slim case for drawing in BAA and buoyant newcomers such as Railtrack. Including generators looks pragmatic but has little logic.

Unlike banks in 1981, however, utilities have no common basis to levy a tax. As the Institute for Fiscal Studies concluded, any regime will be unfair between past and present shareholders, and between companies. A levy based on either sales, profit margins or return on capital would discriminate unfairly between industries of widely varying

character. Any attempt to define excess profits is doomed to endless dispute. Regulators might dredge their files for the profits they projected when they set price limits, but that would only apply to profits earned after the first price review. For most utilities, there are no valid local or international comparisons. Any *a priori* definition of "normal" profits would be subjective and would come back to haunt its champions.

The only solid factual basis for allocating the tax burden is to measure returns to shareholders. These include dividends, capital growth and one-off payouts, which could be compared with returns on the FT-SE 100 share index.

That is not fair either. Management of Wessex Water boosted returns via a successful venture into waste disposal. Most small BT investors bought stock from government in the second and third tranches and have fared badly. The biggest gainer from early outperformance was the Treasury. And why should acquirers be taxed on takeover premiums? Yet such an approach looks the least unfair. It should focus the tax on regional electricity and water companies that have yielded the highest unexpected returns and spare British Gas, whose shares underperformed.

To that end it is vital that "excess" returns be measured right up to the present day. If the calculations are cut off in 1995, as in the IFS exercise, electricity companies are heavily favoured at the expense of Gas and BT. If up to date, electricity and water pay most of the tax.

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Gavin Lumsden explains the benefits and pitfalls of Peps designed to attract windfall shares

# Float into tax haven with care

The £23 billion free share bonanza of 1997 is providing a windfall for the personal equity plan industry, thanks to the Inland Revenue. In a special concession to the ten million people benefiting from these share distributions, the taxman has declared that any saver or borrower receiving shares when a building society becomes a bank can put them in a Pep within 42 days at "zero value". So, anyone wishing also to invest their full £9,000 annual allowance in Peps may do so.

However, the uninitiated should take care amid the multiplicity of Pep offers. A Times survey shows that many schemes that will be offered to windfall shareholders have pitfalls. Anyone, for example, opting to swap their shares for units in a unit trust risks losing that "zero value" concession (see below). Furthermore, although holding shares in a Pep spares them from income tax and capital gains tax, Pep fees may mean that only big windfalls benefit.

For millions of savers, this will be the first time they have considered a Pep. The Alliance & Leicester and the Halifax have announced their Pep options and other converting societies are expected to follow suit. In view of the big opportunity, the rest of the Pep industry has been amazingly slow to offer transfer services to windfall shareholders. Only a few Pep managers are able, or willing, to let people hold shares direct within a Pep — although companies such as Virgin are hurriedly talking to regulators and stockbrokers to try to start a service before the A&L issues shares on April 21. Many unit trust companies



LIKE millions of savers, Jill Hulme is facing the question of what to do with her first shares when Halifax floats on the stock market in June. "Unfortunately, I didn't get round to being a carpet bagger and I am only getting the one set of shares," she said.

Still, having had a mortgage with the society for eight years and a 90-day high interest rate account since 1987,

Jill, 33, is expecting a windfall of £1,000 to £1,500 in shares. Wanting to put the money aside for a rainy day, Jill read to see what her options were. "I realised it was sensible to shelter the shares within a Pep as it avoids paying income and capital gains tax. However, you have to move quite quickly, within 42 days of receiving the shares."

After flogging for the details of several

companies she turned to the independent financial adviser who helped her to sort out her affairs when she set up a marketing company in Macclesfield, Cheshire. He recommended Perpetual's General Pep which charges a holding fee of £4 per dividend (£8 a year). "I'll see how they perform and make a decision on whether to sell and convert them into units in a few months' time."

tive fund such as a unit or investment trust."

However, most experts, such as Charles Levett-Scrivener, of Towry Law, believe that demutualisation shares will be boosted by City institutions desperate to buy them. All of the societies, except perhaps the Halifax, may also become takeover targets after flotation if they themselves go on the takeover trail.

Market speculation will further strengthen the price. Mr Levett-Scrivener recommends hanging on for three months, while others suggest a year. Of course, you may look at the sterling performance of Abbey National shares and decide to be a long-term holder.

■ If you decide to keep the shares, you should avoid single company Peps. These can hold the shares of only one company at a time. You are allowed only one plan a tax year. If you expect further share windfalls, you could be lured into breaching Pep rules by taking out another in the same year, thus losing all the tax breaks. Unlike general Peps, single company Peps later into collective funds such as unit and investment trusts or lower-risk corporate bonds. "A Pep is not just for flotation, it is for life," Mr Levett-Scrivener says. "A general Pep will give you much more flexibility in years to come."

Halifax caused consternation this week when it said it will offer only a single company Pep to its 8.5 million members. Experts fear that thousands of people may unwittingly break tax law by taking up single company Peps when the Woolwich, the Northern Rock and Norwich Union float.

## Accounting for cost of Pepping windfall shares

Companies allowing shares in their general Peps include Fidelity, Henderson, M&G, Mercury and Perpetual. Invesco, John Govett, Johnson Fry, M&G, Mercury, Perpetual, Save & Prosper and Skandia. All have an established track record in managing investment funds and Peps.

Transferring your shares into these providers is free, but there are other charges. With one exception, all are charging a fee for holding the shares in the Pep. Invesco and M&G are levying an annual fee per share set of £15 and £8. Pepping three sets of windfall shares with Invesco would cost £45. In contrast Mercury is charging a flat fee of £15, irrespective of the number of windfalls. Henderson, Perpetual and Skandia are charging £5, £4 and £3 respectively for each dividend paid on the shares. These will be paid twice a year, doubling the price for each share set.

Save & Prosper and Johnson Fry will hold the shares in their Peps free for a year before charging. From next April S&P will collect a £25 annual fee per windfall, which could easily outweigh the tax advantages of staying in the Pep. Johnson Fry will charge 1.5 per cent of the value of the shares, which could soon mount up if you are a multiple share owner. Fidelity will make no charge until April 1999 and will charge £15 if no further investment in its funds has occurred.

Charles Fry of Johnson Fry believes that windfall shareholders should consider these charges before transferring into a Pep: "1,000 Halifax shares might yield you £40 each year. If you're paying a £15 fee you might as well have left it outside the Pep."

The cheapest offer currently is from John Govett, the specialist manager of tracking and futures and options funds. It has recognised to make the holding charge and is offering a "fairly straightforward" £2 per cent dealing charge if the shares are sold later.

Fidelity, Henderson, M&G, Mercury and Perpetual will sell the shares for free but only if you reinvest the cash in their unit trusts or investment trusts. Fidelity charges £35 if you sell the shares for cash. S&P will levy a 1.75 per cent dealing fee from April 1998. Skandia charges 1.2 per cent now, rising to 1.95 per cent on May 31 next year.

However, three of the companies will not allow new investors to hold the shares in their Pep without putting additional money in their funds. Henderson requires £2,000 or £100 per month, S&P a £3,000 lump sum, and Skandia a £1,000 lump sum or £50 monthly savings scheme.

However, John Govett has the highest initial charges on its unit trusts if you do buy their funds: 3.25-5.5 per cent compared with nothing for M&G and Perpetual and 0.3 per cent for Fidelity. Behind these charges there lurks the suspicion that Pep managers have no interest in taking on the burden of managing the shares in the long term.

But Chris Cottrell, marketing director of S&P, is reserving the right to limit the company's offer if the administrative demands become too onerous. S&P was fined £115,000 last year for breaching Pep rules and is fearful of what could happen in June and July if millions of investors transfer shares in the Halifax, Woolwich and Norwich Union. "We have invested substantially in our Pep administration since last year," he said. "Nevertheless, those of us who have good offers on the table could be absolutely flooded by demand. What are we going to do if we get a million deals?"

Mr Levett-Scrivener recommends focusing on companies with a track record in handling large volumes of shares within Peps. "Perpetual has allowed investors to put privatisation shares in its Peps since 1987. M&G has its investment trusts experience, as does Mercury."

## The pick 'n' mix option Trusts target windfalls

An option for people prepared to take a more active interest in their financial affairs is a self-select Pep run by a stockbroker. Self-select Peps allow you to shelter any number of different shares and unit trusts. You can choose to pay for advice or plan your investments on your own. Although most brokers are offering a free transfer to windfall shareholders, other charges do tend to be higher than general Peps.

Pillings, which is based in Manchester, is charging £6.75 for each dividend and a 1.65 per cent dealing charge, with a minimum of £10. Killik & Co. is levying £7.50 per dividend and 1.65 per cent on dealing for its Unrestricted Pep. Cater Direct charges a flat fee of £55, while NatWest Stockbrokers collects 0.6 per cent of the value of the portfolio each year. Alliance &

Leicester is also offering a self-select Pep, managed by Barclays Stockbrokers, although it is quite expensive. On top of a 1 per cent annual management fee, there are dealing costs starting at 2 per cent for trades under £750 and 1.5 per cent for deals up to £10,000.

Matthew Orr, of Killik & Co. said: "If you want to keep your options open, a self-select Pep will let you hold as many windfall shares as you want. If you want to add a unit trust later, you are not restricted to the funds of just one provider — unit trust groups make their fees from unit trusts and will not want to manage shares for ever. If you want to sell straightaway, you should use the building societies' free selling services."

About 17 unit trust groups are offering to exchange windfall shares for units in their general Peps above the normal £6,000 annual allowance. For new investors, all, except Lincoln, are waiving Pep set-up charges. Apart from GT Global and HSBC, these companies require the shares to be worth a minimum amount. If the amount falls short, investors have to supplement it with cash. Barclays Unicorn and Portfolio require £1,000, while Schroders is asking new investors to stump up £3,000 or start a £50 monthly savings scheme.

Britannia Building Society, Capel-Cure Myers, Clerical Medical and Legal & General are waiving the cost of selling the shares and the initial charge on their unit trusts. Framlington caters for those who want to keep some of the

shares and diversify within financial stocks. Three quarters of the shares have to be exchanged into its Financial unit trust, with the rest held for no fee until April 1998.

But remember. Exchanging windfall shares for units could lose you the benefit of the zero value subscription. Alliance & Leicester's new Capital Growth general Pep will not take shares but is open to members who want to exchange them. This week, the society confirmed that it will sell the shares outside the Pep before investing proceeds in the Pep. This cash sum will count towards your £6,000 limit.

The Stock Exchange has published a guide to share ownership to coincide with the wave of windfalls. For a free copy ring 0171-797 1372.

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## Sell-out of the Century pensioners

The ghastly ghost of Robert Maxwell, a spectre beyond even the imagining of Edgar Allan Poe, is slowly being banished from the consciousness of the nation's 11 million company pension scheme members.

The latest step towards this exorcism was taken this week with the implementation of sections of the Pensions Act that make the plunder of funds harder to commit and easier to detect and punish (see page 38). The Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (OPRA), the new pensions watchdog, now presides over the 200,000 company schemes that hold £600 billion of our savings. Unfortunately, OPRA's considerable powers, which extend to ensuring that scheme administration is correctly carried out, only came into effect six days ago. As a result, it cannot help the 80,000 hapless members of the scores of small company



COMMENT

ANNE ASHWORTH  
Personal Finance Editor

schemes, controlled by Century Life, the insurer. Their numbers include the staff at Citizen's Advice Bureaux who are more accustomed to counselling others on their financial problems. All are victims not of theft, but of the sundry ills that have dogged both company and personal pensions in the past decade including over-zealous salesmen.

Their troubles began five years ago when their schemes were transferred from Crown Financial Management which had made a speciality of

selling pension funds to small businesses through its salesmen and financial advisers. At the time, Century saw taking over the administration of such schemes as a marvellous money-making opportunity.

The principal problem for the scheme members has been the difficulty in obtaining information about their pensions, the kind of information that OPRA will ensure is provided regularly to all employees. Some members are close to retirement and are anxious to know the size of their

income in old age. In its defence, Century has argued that the paperwork for many of the Crown schemes was woefully inadequate. The fat commissions paid by Century to its middlemen out of contributions mean that a few schemes cannot meet their liabilities. Some firms have gone out of business and some trustees could not be located.

However, the Pensions Ombudsman's Office, which handles disputes between schemes and individuals, has brought considerable pressure to bear on Century to sort out the mess. Some progress has been made, but the delay is now intolerable. The Department of Trade and Industry, which has responsibility for insurance companies, should interest itself actively in this affair, making it impossible for Century to substitute apologies for action any longer.

## Jenny Grove reports on hardship under the 'third rate' rule

# Cruel trap for war widows

March 31, 1973 is a significant date for members of the Armed Forces and their families. It marks a change in the Armed Forces Pension Scheme which allowed a serviceman's widow one half of her husband's military pension, up from one third.

There was only one snag. Widows of those who had completed their military service before March 1973 were excluded from the legislative largesse — their pensions remained at the old rate. The result was to draw a cruel dividing line between older widows, some of whom now

face hardship, and younger ones. Members of the Armed Forces still serving in March 1973 were given the opportunity to buy in a half-rate widows' pension. Those who had already retired had no such chance. Today about 52,000 elderly widows still receive "third rate" pensions.

A study of 14 comparable Allied schemes by the Officers' Pensions Society, headed by Major General Peter Bonnet, reveals that no other country pays such poor pensions to military widows. "Their husbands invariably fought through the Second World War. At the very least

these ladies deserve a fair pension," he said.

Last year Nicholas Soames, as Minister for the Armed Forces, said that improving "third rate" widows' pensions by raising the rate from one third to one half would cost about £29 million a year.

One widow receiving only one third of her husband's pension is Mrs May Harbin, 84. Her husband, Lieutenant Colonel Henry Harbin, whom she married in 1936, was parachuted into Normandy on D-Day where he was wounded twice. He retired from the Army in 1965 and died 21 years later. Mrs Har-

bin said it was "utterly wrong" that widows in her position should be penalised because their husbands had left the forces before March 1973. "My husband spent 41 years in the Army. It's not much of a reward for long service, is it? It's quite hard to manage on my income. I just have to be frugal," she said.

Coronation Street recently highlighted another quirk in military pensions when it featured a war widow who fell in love. In the television series, Clare Palmer forfeited her war widows' pension when she decided to live with Des Barnes. Having opted for

romance rather than income, Clare lost both when the relationship foundered. A war widow loses her DSS and Forces Family pensions if she remarries or lives with a man as husband and wife.

It may be some consolation for real-life Clare Palmers that should such relationships break down, their war widows' pension will now be restored automatically after a rule change this month. Even so, many war widows are unwilling to consider remarriage for fear of jeopardising their financial security. Pension rules, they claim, consign them to permanent widowhood.

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## Wrong side of the date

Kate Bartholomew, 75, gets no military pension, because she married Major John Bartholomew in 1974, after he had left the Army. His wartime career included mindboggling on the Norfolk coastlines, bomb disposal work and a rescue attempt at Great Yarmouth across a mined beach, for which he was awarded the George Medal. His first wife died in 1973 and he retired from the Army that year. Since his death, 20 years on, Mrs Bartholomew has received no military pension.

Until April 6, 1978, the Armed Forces Pension Scheme did not pay pensions to widows who married after their husbands had retired. The rules were changed on that date to enable such widows to get a pension, but only if their husbands served in the Forces after April 1978.



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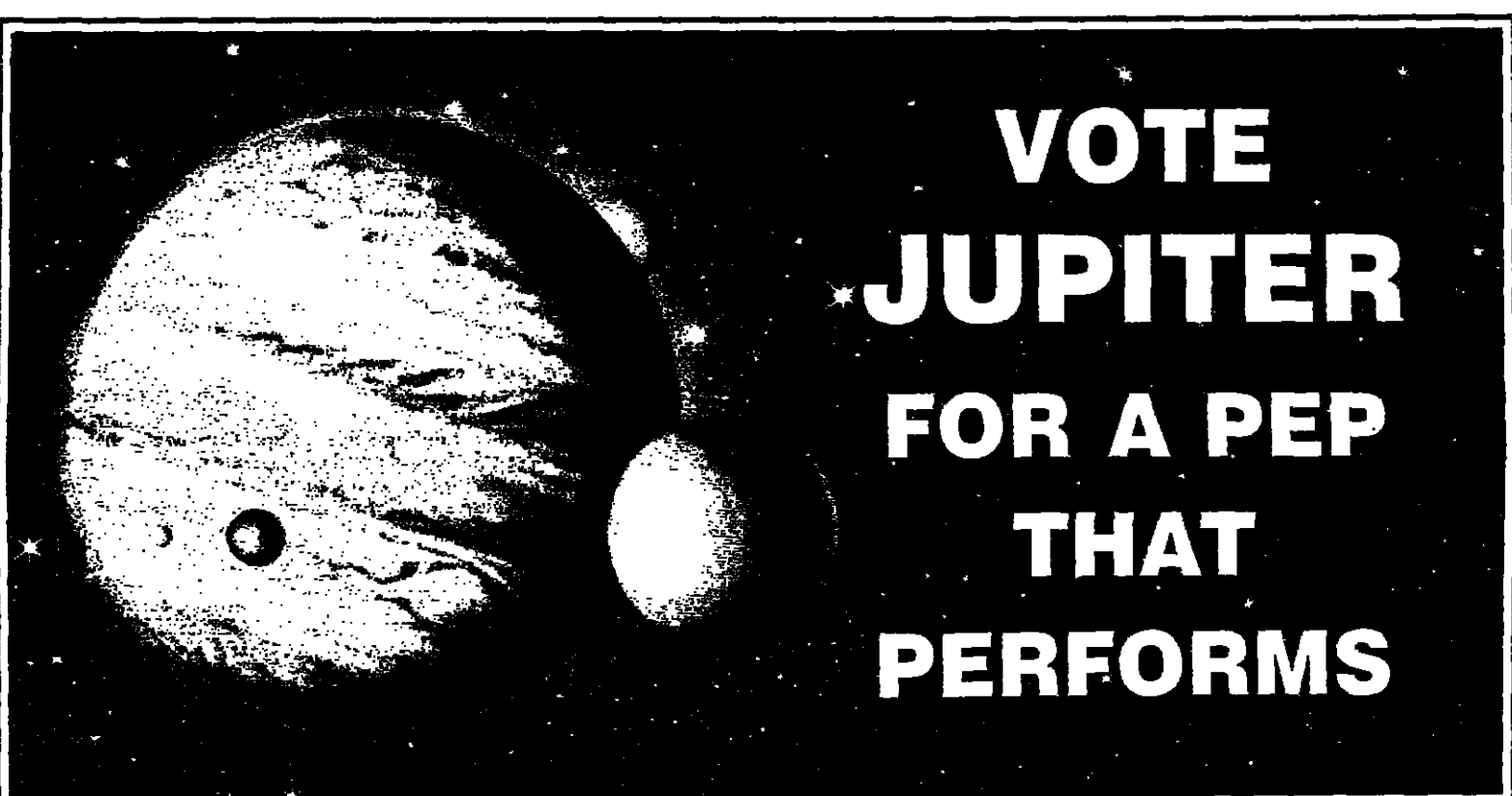
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Gavin Lumsden looks at the tricky business of picking the right emerging markets for your portfolio

# Egypt is back on the investment map

Egypt has re-entered the public consciousness after the Oscar-winning exploits of *The English Patient*. However, watching the film, where a passionate love affair between two people is kindled against the backdrop of Cairo's famous bazaar, you'd have no idea that the country actually had the world's fifth-largest stock exchange at the start of the Second World War in 1939.

That Cairo hardly springs to mind when compiling a list of stock exchanges is largely down to President Nasser, who nationalised the largest companies in the 1960s. This is beginning to change. Last May the Government began a privatisation programme with 91 state companies going under the hammer this year.

Economic reforms are putting the country back on the investment map, joining the ranks of nearby Israel, Jordan and Morocco, as well as the diverse countries of Latin America, the Far East and eastern and central Europe, which all come under the banner of emerging markets.

These regions are now the undoubted powerhouses of the global economy, putting the more developed US and European markets in the shade. According to the Union Bank of Switzerland, the developing economies produce half of global GDP, a proportion which is forecast to grow to two thirds by the year 2020. Attracted by this "growth differential" it is not surprising to learn that investors have ploughed more than \$200 billion into stocks and shares in emerging markets since the 1980s.

Despite the strength of the long-term trends, investors have not had an easy time in emerging markets. The Mexi-



Bargain hunters: Kristin Scott Thomas and Ralph Fiennes in *The English Patient* visit the bazaar in Cairo, site of what used to be the world's fifth-largest stock exchange

can peso crisis in 1994, in particular, dealt a body blow to the rest of Latin America and temporarily dragged down the other emerging markets with it. Overall returns have sagged since. As UBS points out, emerging markets have underperformed every other major asset class except

Japan since 1985, and that country has provided thoroughly miserable returns.

So how can investors succeed in emerging markets? By dispelling the notion altogether, UBS suggests. In its latest *Guide to the Emerging Markets*, it has analysed 50 economies stretching from Argentina

to Croatia, from the Philippines to Ukraine, and found them to be weakly correlated — that is, their behaviour has little to do with each other. Only in a Mexican-inspired meltdown do they move together — down. If investors want to exploit their potential for superior growth,

they should concentrate on a few countries rather than spreading themselves across the whole lot. This is a "top-down" approach.

For instance, enlivening your portfolio of developed country shares with a 10 per cent holding in all emerging markets actually diminishes

your return and increases the risk. UBS shows. But dividing that 10 per cent between the four largest emerging economies of Brazil, Malaysia, Mexico and South Africa gives the best returns and lowers risk as well. However, many believe Malaysia and South Africa, which are sophisticated mar-

kets, have outgrown their lot in the emerging category.

This goes against the grain of the usual "bottom-up" approach to emerging markets, which is to focus on particular stocks. UBS says that fund managers who pick the worst stocks in the best markets will beat rivals who

choose the best stocks in the worst markets, although there is not always much in it.

Last year Venezuela topped all emerging markets with 132 per cent growth, although its 10 worst stocks managed only 33 per cent. In contrast, Korea, last year's emerging dog, which fell back 39 per cent, had ten stocks that grew a creditable 30 per cent.

Richard Timberlake, investment director of Portfolio Fund Managers, which runs a unit trust investing in emerging market funds, prefers to steer a middle course between "top down" and "bottom up" styles.

Mr Timberlake said: "The problem with picking countries is that it is a lot more difficult than picking companies. Timing is crucial for selecting countries — there are exchange rates, macroeconomic factors and confidence to take into account. It is far easier to be scientific when analysing companies. When you do see a fundamental negative shift in countries you don't know when it will be reflected in the stock market."

He argues that the lack of correlation between emerging markets can help investors — when one country is down another may be up. Besides, he says, country selection has only had a marked effect in the past 18 months, when "it was essential to be in Hong Kong but out of Thailand and South Korea, which were absolute dogs".

Focusing closely could overlook growth opportunities. Far better to be diversified in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Hong Kong-China, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Czech Republic and Poland.

The UK's biggest fund managers are not switching around their UK holdings because of the 150-point fall in the FT-SE 100 index of leading shares over the last month. The fall in share prices, following on from the decline in shares in the US, is not driving fund managers in to more defensive stocks or cash. Neither are they making significant portfolio changes because of the almost certain arrival of a Labour government.

The biggest effect of the drop in the index has been on those who left purchasing their personal equity plans (PEPs) until the last moment at the end of the tax year on April 5. The managers report that PEP sales were subdued until

## Fund managers keep their cool

the closing days of the year. Then it seemed many investors decided to buy. Some were undeterred by the fall in the index. Others were encouraged by the sight of tumbling share values.

Gartmore, for example, reported that it had experienced a slowdown in PEP sales at the beginning of the year. However, Lewis MacNaught, Gartmore managing director, said: "As we came up to the end of the year, lots more people started investing. We took £29 million in just a few days."

Over the last month the value of an average UK unit trust has fallen around 6 per cent. Over the last 12 months the value of an average unit trust rose 8 per cent.

Despite the likely arrival of the first Labour government for 18 years, the UK's big fund managers this week said they are not planning to change around their UK holdings entirely. None are about to move in to cash and many have been heartened by this week's pronouncements from the Labour Party

about privatisation. To the surprise of many, Labour is no longer opposed, in theory, to privatisations and believes that some industries would fare better in private hands.

Bridget Cleverly, Schroder director, said: "As far as the general election is concerned, we are not intending to make many changes to the portfolios of our trusts. A Labour win has already been priced in to the stock market. We are underweight in utilities companies. As far as currency is concerned, sterling

could go higher. We have cut back from being overweight in general industrial companies and have reduced our emphasis on exporters. We prefer leisure and food companies."

Stephen Whittaker, Perpetual's head of UK investment, said: "The Labour win has already been priced in to the market. Even the windfall tax on the utilities has already been factored in to the price."

Mr Whittaker believes that despite the almost certain rise in interest rates, banks and financial companies will

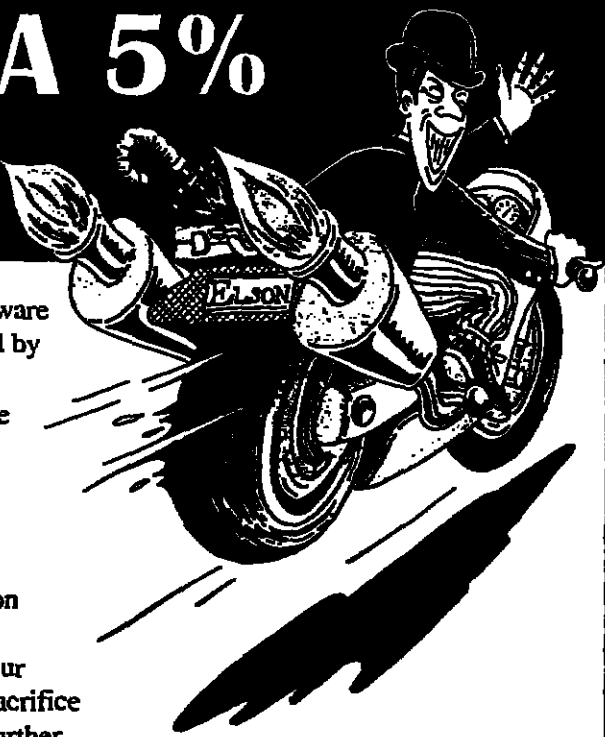
produce good returns in the post-election environment. He said: "We also favour food retailers and pharmaceutical companies."

John Hatherly, M&G head of UK research, said: "We have not increased our 5 per cent weighting in cash because of the recent market falls. We believe that a Blair government has already been factored in to the price."

"There is almost certainly going to be an interest rate rise after the election whoever is in power. Interest rates are artificially being kept down until after the election. We expect rates to go up by up to 1 per cent."

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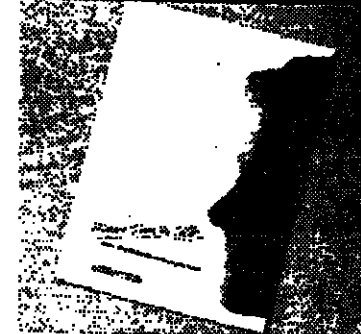
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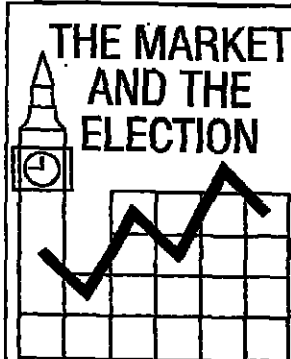
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Matthew Wall on a topsy-turvy week

# Campaigning in wonderland



MICHAEL POWELL



Martin Bell, whose anti-sleaze candidature exemplifies the bizarre tone of the election, with his daughter, Melissa

Maybe it is the influence of the Hale-Bopp comet but this election campaign has an Alice in Wonderland feel about it. Everything is topsy-turvy.

We are presented with the extraordinary situation of a Chancellor and his opposite number appearing to be more pro-European than the Foreign Secretary and his opposite number, and where a former BBC war correspondent is standing as an unlikely anti-sleaze candidate against an MP mired in the "cash-for-questions" scandal.

Meanwhile, the Institute of Fiscal Studies tells us, with a Carrollian flair for paradox, that although the overall burden of taxation has gone up since the last election, the average family is actually better off thanks to rising incomes.

The Tories tell us Britain is booming — last week's record consumer credit figures seem to bear this out — and yet this week's manufacturing output figures showing a mere 0.2 per cent growth in February, seem to tell a different story.

This week's opinion polls are no less confusing. A MORI poll for *The Times* has Labour's lead over the Tories cut to 15 percentage points, whereas a Gallup poll for *The Daily Telegraph* has Labour 25 percentage points ahead. The voters, it seems, are just as volatile as the markets, which continue to behave erratically.

The FT-SE 100 index edged slightly

higher this week, closing at 4,313.2 on Thursday. It fell to 4,270.7 on Friday, down 42.5, under the influence of New York. The Dow had recovered to finish on Thursday at 6,540.05. Its decline on Friday was attributed to news of robust retail sales which had awakened fears of higher interest rates.

Comparative figures from Datastream/ICV show that in this election the market is behaving broadly as it did during the 1992 campaign, with share prices falling and trading volumes depressed in the run-up to polling day. But there the similarity ends.

In 1992 the City feared a Labour victory that was being predicted by the polls. So when the Tories won the FT-SE soared instantly by over 150 points. This time, the City is resigned to a Labour victory in the knowledge that Tony Blair's party is a far cry from Neil Kinnock's. The market volatility in this campaign has more to do with Wall Street.

This week saw the Labour Party, supposedly more pro-Europe than the Tories, appearing — should it win power — to rule out joining a European single currency in the lifetime of the next Parliament. The City had welcomed Labour's apparently pro-European stance since it sees the European convergence criteria of low inflation and low

interest rates as prerequisites for strong domestic economic growth. Labour, it is believed, would be good for the UK bond markets. But this week's more sceptical noises have muddled the waters.

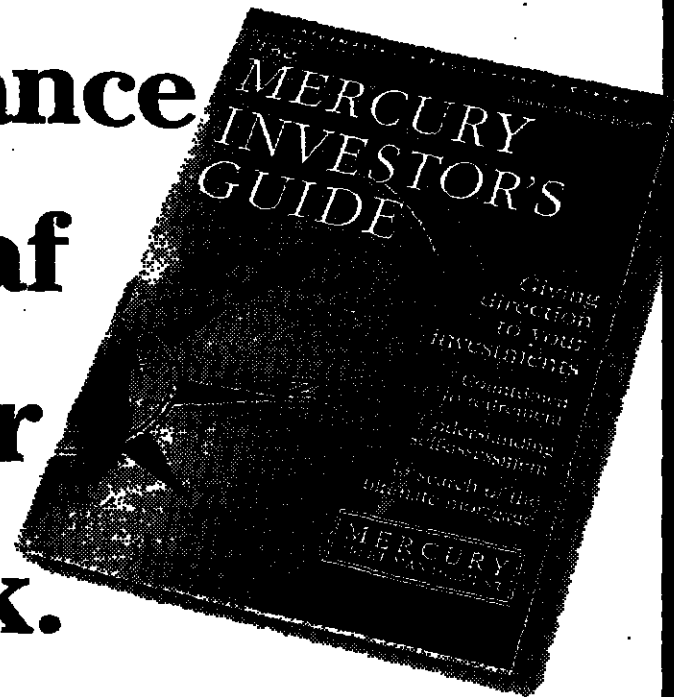
Gilt-edged prices have fallen by nearly 10 per cent since February 18, with yields on ten-year gilts rising from a low of 7.09 per cent to 7.63 per cent now.

Although this seems to indicate renewed City fears of rising inflation under a Labour government, Mark Capleton, international bond strategist at BZW, the merchant bank, said: "The downward move in gilt prices is largely due to the US Treasury market, where yields on ten-year Treasuries have risen from 6.28 per cent to 6.91 per cent."

He added: "We have had a series of robust US economic data since February and this tipped the balance towards interest rate rises by the US Federal Reserve. Its 0.25 per cent rate increase is certain to be followed by others and this is making the bond and equity markets jittery."

As inflation is the bond market's mortal enemy, you would have thought that increasing interest rates to tackle inflation would be welcomed. But as short-term interest rates rise, so does the cost of borrowing for companies and their customers. Profits are put under pressure and this affects the sentiment on Wall Street.

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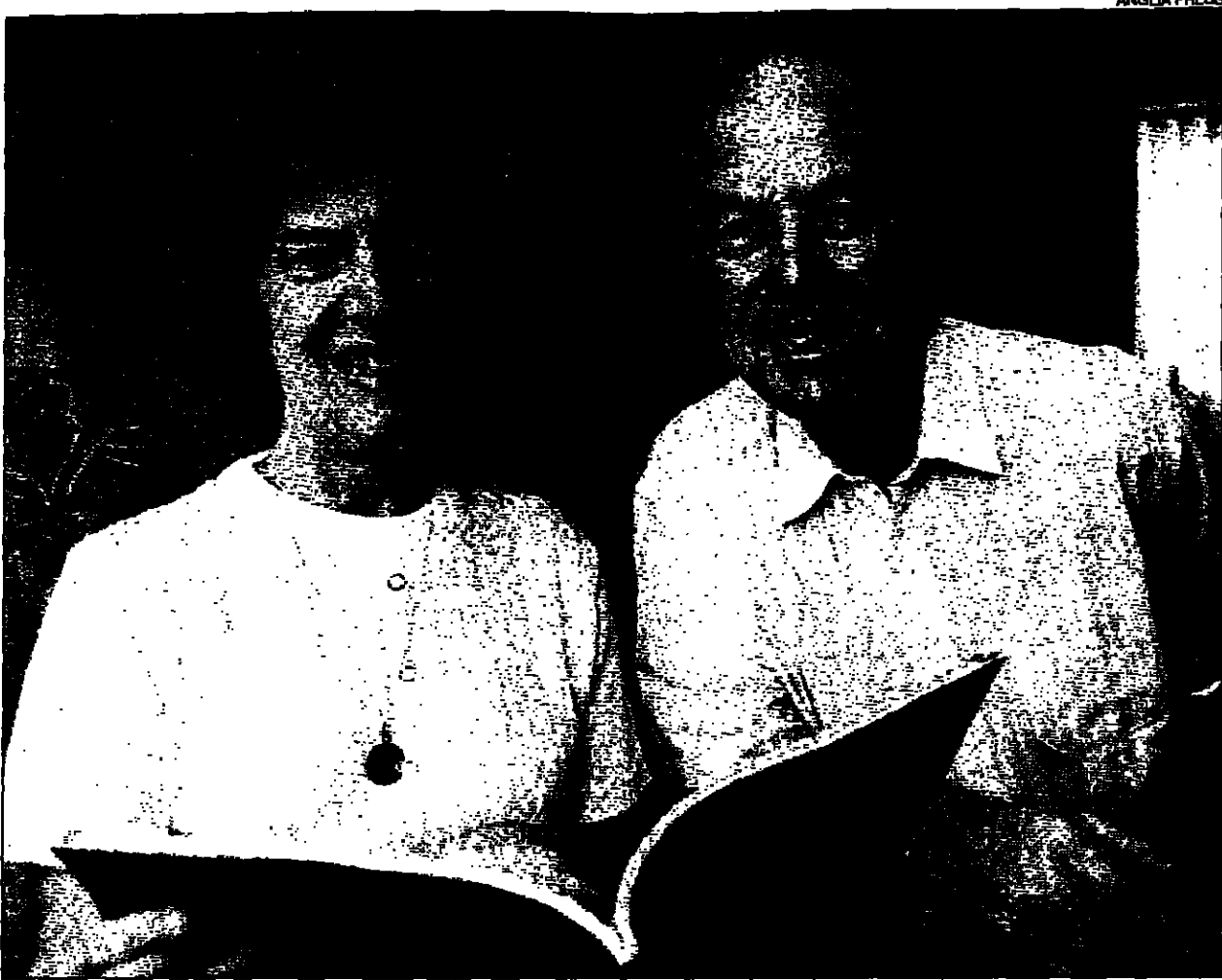
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Karen Zagor reports on some confusion over the Bristol &amp; West acquisition

# A shared preference for clarity



Undecided: Margaret and David Crerar, who have been seeking clarification on the Bristol & West shares offer

As members of the Bristol & West prepare for Tuesday's vote on the society's planned acquisition by the Bank of Ireland, some may find themselves perplexed by what they are being offered — like David and Margaret Crerar.

Under the terms of the deal, eligible two-year investing Bristol & West members who had £100 in their accounts on the requisite dates will receive a cash bonus of more than £1,100. Savers who did not meet the £100 requirement but who topped up their accounts in time, will get £250 in cash. Borrowers, and those savers who do not qualify for a cash bonus, will get at least 250 in preference shares. The preference shares are expected to be valued at £1 a share, and will carry a dividend.

If the takeover goes ahead, Bristol & West will become Bristol & West plc, which will be wholly-owned by the Bank of Ireland and listed on the London Stock Exchange. This has led to Mr Crerar's question: "If the new company is to be a wholly-owned subsidiary how can they issue shares in the new company to current shareholders? Surely, Bristol & West ceases to be wholly-owned in that case."

Mr Crerar has written twice to the society without receiving a satisfactory response. The



answer, however, is simple and has more to do with the nature of preference shares than the structure of the deal. Preference shares fall somewhere between ordinary shares and corporate bonds or debt. Ordinary shares are a share in the ownership of the company. Anyone who has more than 50 per cent of the outstanding ordinary shares in a company becomes a majority shareholder with controlling rights.

Preference shares confer no such ownership rights but pay a guaranteed dividend which is not linked to profitability and, in the event of a company failure, preference shareholders are paid out first.

Members who have not already sent in their completed voting forms can vote in person at the special general meeting April 15. Bristol & West needs the support of at least half of its eligible members, of whom at least 75 per cent must approve the deal.

## Bad news for bonus-hunting small investors

In a week when the Bristol & West and Northern Rock are both holding special meetings — the former to vote on merger, the latter to vote on plans to convert to a listed company — bonus-hunters may be looking for a new home for their money in the hope of receiving another building society windfall (Karen Zagor writes).

Alastair McArthur, an 18-year-old student, currently has £1,500 in a National Savings Investment account and wants to know which societies may float in the next year or so.

The bad news for Mr McArthur and other windfall hunters is that the stampede to merge or convert has probably ended. Furthermore, in an attempt to deter bounty-hunters, many societies have raised the lower limits for accounts that confer membership status. And societies are not necessarily offering the best rates on the market.

A National Savings Investment account will currently pay 5.25 per cent gross on amounts between £500 and £25,000. According to research by Money Facts, Mr McArthur would have to go to Sainsbury's Bank, which is paying 5.75 per cent on any amount

over £1, to beat that rate. For Mr McArthur, and other non-taxpayers, one advantage of remaining with National Savings is that the interest is paid gross. With bank and building society savings accounts, 20 per cent tax is taken at source unless the saver fills out a form to receive the income gross.

If Mr McArthur wants to gamble and accept a lower rate in the short term in the hopes of long-term profitability, he could shop around for the best deals from one of the remaining societies. Although their rates may not match Sainsbury's, which is new to the savings scene and trying to build a customer base, there are some reasonable rates on offer.

Building society rates started to improve last year, when the societies realised the need to give members evidence of the benefits of mutuality. Bradford & Bingley, for example, now offers savings rates on average, 0.5 percentage points higher than its competitors. On £1,500, a B&B instant-access account will pay 3.1 per cent, a one-year bond 5.35 per cent, an instant-access postal account 4.8 per cent and a 30-day notice postal account 5.1 per cent.

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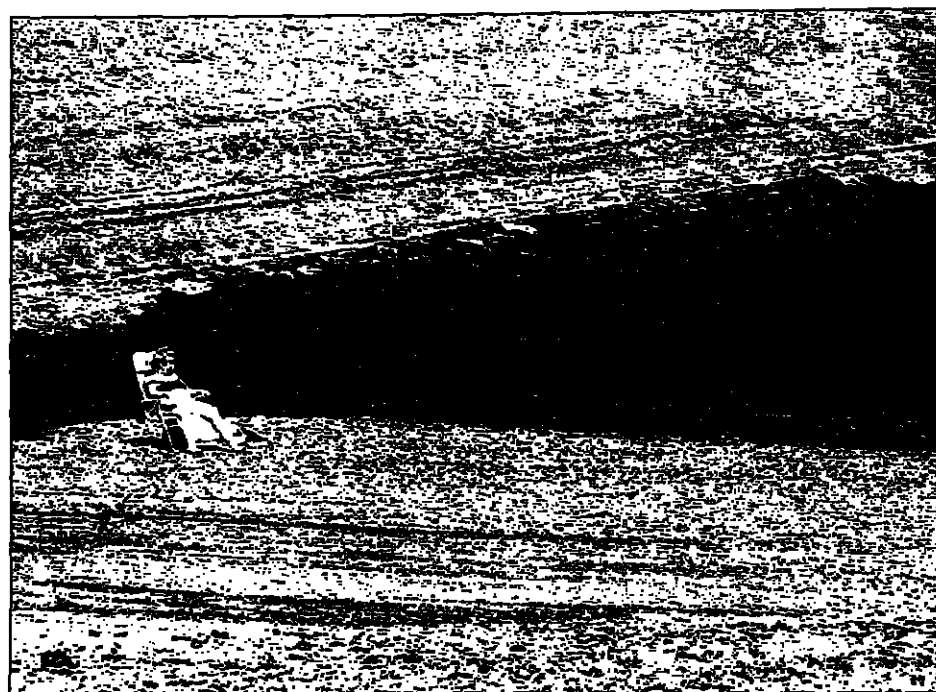
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## Drought cover fears hit home sales

Home buyers whose new property has a history of subsidence from the past two years of dry summers, are being left high and dry by insurers who have previously covered the property but who are refusing to continue once the new owner takes possession. Sales are collapsing because buyers cannot find cover elsewhere.

Such refusals fly in the face of an insurance industry convention that the existing insurer continues to offer cover on properties which have been underpinned or have other problems. This is meant to protect homeowners who would otherwise face rejection from other insurers and be unable to buy because lenders insist on buildings insurance.

Robert Hooker, of the Subsidence Claims Advisory Bureau, which advises on subsidence claims, said the bureau was being approached by more buyers as the property market continues to pick up. He said: "We have a lot of desperate callers who want to exchange but cannot get insurance. Companies will meet



claims and pay for repairs but won't accept new business when there is a new owner." Mr Hooker added many insurers are guilty of refusing to continue cover. "It is a form of risk management."

The problem is particularly acute in London and the South East, which is among the most subsidence-prone areas in the country and which is also experiencing the most buoyant property markets.

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) said there was nothing to compel its mem-

bers to continue offering cover. Buyers could usually find insurance elsewhere, although they might have to pay higher premiums for it, said the ABI. Insurers contacted by *The Times* deny that they refuse cover to new owners of subsidence-affected properties.

David Neave, household business manager at Royal Sun Alliance said: "Normally buyers would arrange a policy through a lender. We would prefer to see the new lender take on the risk. But if we have paid for a property to be

underpinned, we cannot be seen to wash our hands of it."

Norwich Union said: "If we've repaired the house we're happy to continue covering it. Otherwise the customer would be left in the lurch." One buyer of a house whose survey had uncovered cracks had drawn a blank on insurance cover everywhere until he approached Norwich Union which already insured the property and agreed to continue, it said.

SARA MCCONNELL AND NATHAN YATES

## Predators already on the trail of NU

In less than a week, Norwich Union's 2.9 million eligible members will have voted on the mutual's plans to become a quoted company worth between £3 billion and £4 billion, depending on market conditions.

Most will have cast their vote by post, but up to one thousand are expected to turn up at the London Arena next Friday to vote in person.

When NU comes to the stock market this summer policyholders will each enjoy an average £800 windfall, but there are many City observers who are sceptical about the mutual life insurer's ability to remain independently quoted.

Some even predict NU will be taken over before it gets to market. This could mean even bigger payouts for qualifying policyholders because the

predator would need to offer them an attractive alternative. As the UK's second-largest mutual insurance company after Standard Life, with £40 billion in funds under management and £4.7 billion of worldwide gross premium in 1995, NU would be a good long-term investment for many predators.

Its flotation price will give it a value similar to Legal & General, but smaller than Prudential or Commercial Union.

There are plenty of companies, including a number of continental insurers, which have the size and the cash available to buy it, but they will probably have to pay up to £5 billion for it.

Meanwhile, speculators are now looking at the future of NPI, the mutual pension pro-

vider which this week announced that Alastair Lyons, formerly of the Abbey National, would be joining it as chief executive.

Mr Lyons was chief executive of the N&P when it was taken over by Abbey last year.

and his appointment has fuelled speculation that NPI, whose performance has been constrained recently by a lack of access to capital, may soon succumb to a takeover bid.

MARIANNE CURPHEY

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Sara McConnell on a case of maladministration

# The pension that shrank

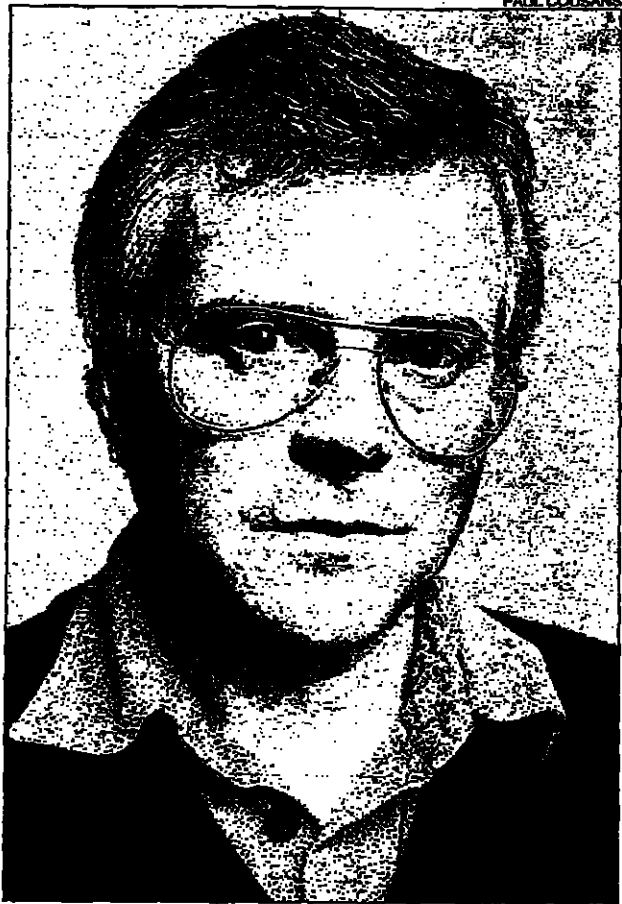
It is safe to assume that you have been given the right information from your company when you are trying to review your pension arrangements? Not necessarily. But if you have been told the wrong thing and believe you have lost out as a consequence, do you have any comeback? Unfortunately, probably not.

Alan Bowen, a Weekend Money reader, is an accountant by profession and likes to review his pension position regularly, generally when he moves jobs. He relies on information from employers to decide whether to leave his pension invested or transfer it. Wrongly, as he discovered.

"I worked for a company from April 1985 until September 1987. On leaving I received a letter from the company telling me that I had certain options regarding my company pension. [The options were to leave the pension where it was, transfer it to a new employer's scheme, or transfer it to a personal pension.] I decided that in the circumstances it was beneficial to leave it with the company and my new employer contributed to an executive personal pension scheme on my behalf.

"In 1991 I changed jobs again and asked for a transfer value for my frozen pension with the first company. They sent me a transfer form showing a transfer value of £6,574 or an annual pension of £5,499. In 1996, I asked for another transfer value because I changed jobs again and they gave me a transfer value of £4,891, or an annual pension of £2,059.

"I pointed out that over time the figures should increase, not decrease. They replied by telling me the 1991 figures



Miscalculated: Alan Bowen's transfer value fell in five years

were a mistake. I had requested the transfer values because I felt it was appropriate to review my pension. The 1991 information led me to believe that the current position was fine, that the funds were best left with the company and I did not need to make additional voluntary contributions (AVCs) to top up my pension and cover any shortfall. But now I feel I should have been paying AVCs from early 1991.

The company has apologised and seems to think this is sufficient. But it cannot be right that large employers can promise people one thing and then withdraw it. The company's information caused me to take an inappropriate course of action and I can never recover six lost years of AVCs."

Weekend Money replies: "The company has admitted to



you that it made an administrative error when you first asked for a transfer value in 1989. The wrong (higher) figure was written on the transfer form and keyed into the computer, overriding and recalculating the original benefits. Staff who calculated your value at the time had wrongly indexed it by 5 per cent a year when there should not have been any increase at all. This threw out calculations in 1991 and the mistake was not discovered until you queried it last year. The company says it would have caught the mistake in 1991 if you had actually wanted to take the transfer value.

The problem is that legally you have few grounds for redress. According to Penny Green, chief executive of the Occupational Pensions Advisory Service (OPAS), the charity which gives free advice on occupational pensions, you have not suffered an actual loss, only a disappointment. As your pension from the company will be based on your final salary with the company, you will still get the value of your pension.

A transfer value is not the same as a fund value. It is simply the result of an actuarial calculation of what cash sum, invested today, will be

enough to buy you your pension on retirement. Transfer values change depending on factors like interest rates, inflation and the value of the underlying funds.

Ms Green suggests you might be able to lodge a claim for distress and inconvenience on grounds of maladministration. OPAS is the first port of call for such complaints about occupational pension schemes, so contact it on 0171-233 8080. If it cannot solve your case, it will pass it to the Pensions Ombudsman.

## Election adds new dimension to annuity see-saw quandary

The launch of the Government's privatisation plans last month means that pensions of the future have become a political battleground in the run-up to the general election. But the possibility of a change in annuity rates means that May 1 could also have an effect on pensions in the shorter term.

The City is predicting that interest rates could rise by as much as 0.5 per cent after polling day, and that this could mean an improvement in annuity deals. This possibility is troubling Walter Toubkin, a reader of Weekend Money.

Mr Toubkin holds a personal pension plan which has already matured, and Inland Revenue regulations mean

that he has until June to buy his annuity. "I've been told I might get a better deal after the election," he said. "Is it worth me holding on?"

Weekend Money replies: Pension fund holders buying annuities in the next few months are faced with the classic problem of the annuity see-saw. Before the election interest rates are likely to remain low, and the stock market should be relatively buoyant, so your pension fund ought to be healthy and you will have plenty of annuity buying power. But low interest rates also mean that many annuity deals are now poor.

After polling day, a rise in interest rates is likely whichever party wins. This could mean

an improvement in annuity rates, but it could also result in a stock market fall and a decrease in the value of your pension fund, which would reduce the size of annuity you could buy. Any gains made through obtaining a better annuity rate may be offset by this loss in buying potential.

The possible election see-saw in which annuity rates and the value of pension funds balance out each other may seem to offer a no-win situation. But, as William Sallitt of the Annuity Bureau, the independent annuity specialist, explained, there is one way you could make the most of polling day changes. "If interest rates are likely to rise and you are buying an annuity in the near future, it could make sense to withdraw your pension money and place it in a secure cash fund for a few months," he said.

"All those with unit-linked policies are able to do this, and using this method you can make sure you lose no buying power if the market falls," he added. "If annuity rates then rise you are able to take full advantage — it is a way of exploiting both sides of the annuity see-saw."

But be warned that annuity market fluctuations are notoriously difficult to predict, and other factors beside interest rates could affect the value of your pension fund. However, if there is a post-election rise

of 0.5 per cent in interest rates and all else goes according to plan, securing your capital in a cash fund and waiting until after May 1 before buying could reap you more than 5 per cent a year extra income, according to some insurers.

Annuity rates vary widely and the wrong choice could cut your annual income by thousands of pounds for the rest of your life. The insurance company that has been running your pension does not necessarily offer the best annuity and you have the right to take your fund to another insurer offering better rates.

Currently returns from the companies listed by Annuity Bureau on an annuity of

Annuity rates — page 42

£75,000 range from £6,550 per year from Scottish Amicable to £8,049 at Stalwart Assurance, and choosing the more competitive option would make a difference of £14,990 after ten years.

"Selecting where to buy your annuity and timing your purchase can make a large difference to your income levels," Mr Sallitt said. "Many people make careful decisions when it comes to choosing a pension plan, but the importance of annuity choices is less well known, and it is time that the public became more aware."

NATHAN YATES

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\* Source: Mifflin Ltd. buying price to selling price, from 1.3.91-17.3.97, the UK Stockmarket Fund grew by 120.7% with income re-invested (an annualised growth rate of 14.6%). 1% discount on the buying price applies until 30.4.97.

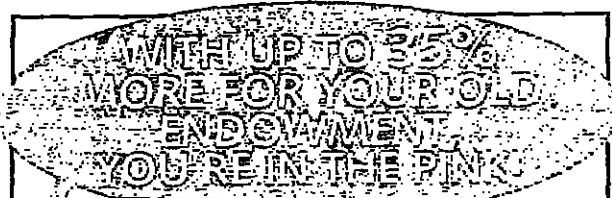
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## TAX SELF-ASSESSMENT SPECIAL REPORT

## Grasp the nettle early

**Tony Foreman**  
says the new  
self-assessment  
form is different  
but not difficult  
to understand

The first self-assessment (SA) tax forms were dispatched this week to the eight million individuals affected by the new system. SA, the largest single reform of income tax since its introduction in 1978, will bring big changes for the self-employed and higher-rate taxpayers. If you have already received your form and are suffering a severe shock at its complexities and at the severe penalties you will face for inaccuracies or delays, read our guide to surviving SA.

SA requires that you carry out certain tasks by fixed deadlines. If you fail to deal with your tax affairs in a business-like way, you will be charged interest and surcharges and possibly worse. The second thing to note is that the new-style tax return may be unfamiliar but is not as difficult as it may seem. A trial carried out in Leicester over the past two years showed that 50 per cent of returns contained clerical errors which needed correction, such as arithmetical mistakes, figures entered in the wrong column, etc.

The standard eight-page return may need to be supplemented by additional schedules so this is probably your



Even newlyweds Liam Gallagher and Patsy Kensit cannot escape self-assessment

first task: to see if you have the extra schedules needed.

SA makes no difference to independent taxation, where a husband and wife's tax affairs are treated separately. This means newlyweds Liam and Patsy will have to get to grips with its complexities in the same way as any other married couple.

You should note that the Inland Revenue has powers enabling them to check up. Tax officials will be using these powers and will not find it amusing if you are audited and found wanting.

■ Get organised. Start to collect the information that you will need (see summary).

■ Do not throw anything away. You should keep your records until January 31, 1999. January 31, 2003, if you run a business or receive rental income. The Revenue policy on SA is "Process now, check later". The Revenue will be able to open an inquiry into your 1996-97 return by serving a notice before February 1, 1999, and will not have to justify doing so.

■ Do not leave everything to the last minute. There will be

an automatic £100 penalty for filing your return late and, while January 31, 1998, is a long way off, it will be easier to tackle the return whilst things are fresh in your mind. If there are any gaps in your records — you have been under a legal obligation to keep adequate records since April 6, 1996 — you may be able to reconstruct them by getting down to the task before the trail goes completely cold.

■ Do not send in an incomplete return: it will only be rejected. If you had benefits in kind such as a company car or

a mobile telephone, you will need to put down a figure for your taxable benefit, just reporting "per form P11D" or "as PAYE" is not acceptable.

■ Start to put cash aside now so that you can settle your 1996-97 tax and make a payment on account for 1997-98 next January 31. If you are short of funds after Christmas you may find yourself exposed to interest. The APR is currently 8.5 per cent. Worse still, if you are not able to clear your 1996-97 tax by February 28, you will be liable for an automatic 5 per cent surcharge equal to an APR of 60 per cent.

■ Consider filing by September 30. Somerset House has given repeated assurances that filing early will not increase the likelihood of your return being selected for inquiry. On a positive note, the Revenue will collect underpayments of up to £1,000 via the PAYE system if you submit your return by September.

■ Work on the basis that your return will be selected for inquiry. The Revenue will be selecting 10,000 returns each year on a random basis. Tax offices are also expected to check another 30,000 returns.

■ Remember to tick the box if your return contains any estimated or provisional figures. It will probably be in your own best interests to give an explanation of how you have arrived at the figures as this may preempt Revenue queries. It may also afford a degree of protection against the Revenue coming back after January 31, 1999, and reopening 1996-97 by making a "discovery" assessment.

■ Get professional advice if your affairs are complicated.

## VITAL INFORMATION FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

## EMPLOYED:

You will need your Form P60, the annual certificate of pay and tax deducted at source, which your employer should provide automatically.

Taxable figures for any benefits in kind, company car, mobile phone, cheap loans in excess of £5,000 from your current employer.

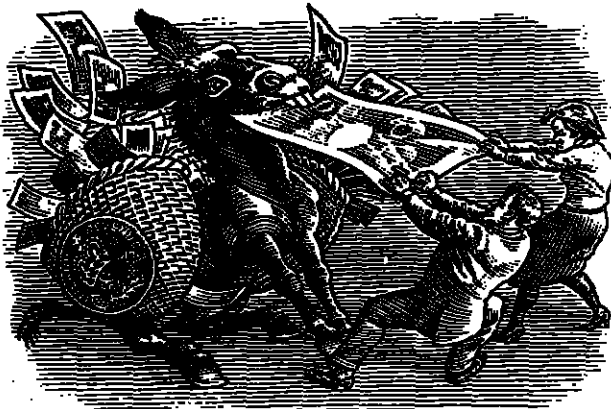
Details of amounts paid to you under the Fixed Profit Car Scheme for using your own car for company business.

(If you changed jobs during the year ended 5 April 1997) details of any of these benefits that were provided by your previous employer.

Advice from your employer as to what to report if you received free shares or exercised or were given a share option in 1996-97.

## SELF-EMPLOYED

You will need to prepare ac-



counts or have an accountant do them for you. The Revenue requires your details in a set format so it can use its computer to identify cases to be taken up for inquiry.

## RENTAL INCOME

You should keep an analysis of rents receivable for 1996-97

and a note of any bad debts, details of expenditure such as fees to managing agents, repair bills and re-decoration, replacement of electrical goods and furniture for the properties concerned. If you borrowed to fund your property business, the interest should be an allowable expense.

## SAVINGS INCOME

You keep a copy of your bank deposit account statements, building society passbook and dividend vouchers.

## TRUST INCOME

You need form R185 which sets out the income paid to you and tax deducted at source.

## CAPITAL GAINS

You will need the broker's contract notes for share sales and copies of the sale contract and completion statement if you have sold any properties. If you gave assets to your children you may be liable for CGT as if you had sold at market value, so seek advice.

Tony Foreman, partner at the accountants Pannell Kerr Forster, is author of *The Allied Dunbar Tax Handbook 1997-98*, published by Pitman Publishing £25.99.

## READING LIST

Kidson Imprey chartered accountants: *Self Assessment*, 0171 334 4778.

NatWest Investment's *Self Assessment*, *Understanding the New Tax System*: 0800 200 400.

Guardian Direct's *A Guide to Tax Self Assessment* 0500 28 28 20.

Menzies Chartered Accountants' *Self Assessment*, *A Summary*: 01483 755000.

Sam Life of Canada's *Guide to Self Assessment*: 01256 303 204.

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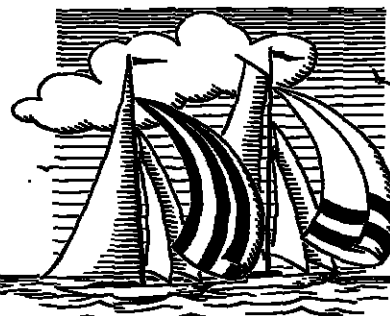
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# Be assured for the term of your life

If you are in the market for a life insurance policy, now is a good time to opt for term assurance, according to a report this week by Swiss Re, the leading reinsurer.

Increasing competition and fading anxieties over Aids have resulted in an average 12 per cent drop in term assurance premiums since 1994. Customers are now benefiting from some of the lowest premium prices since the war.

Term assurance is the simplest and often cheapest form of cover that the life insurance industry can offer. It has no investment element. The policy is arranged for a fixed period to pay out a fixed sum if you die, it pays. If you live, you receive nothing.

The relatively low cost of term cover makes it the ideal choice for families who want a generous amount of life insurance for a small outlay. Recent publicity over the cost of the services carried out every week by a wife and mother has made families realise that both partners need life insurance. Although new men are reputed to be doing more around the house, to replace mother in her role as cook, cleaner, driver, nurse, gardener and such like will cost more than £300 a week.

However, a survey for *The Times* by London & Country, based in Bath, shows that

**Nathan Yates says increasing competition means the price of premiums has rarely been cheaper**

when buying term assurance it still pays to shop around. Premiums in this sector of the insurance market vary widely. A 35-year-old man could pay up to £32.30 a month for a 20-year term with a payout of £100,000 with Clerical Medical. This compares well with the typical £50 cost of a whole-life policy of the same value, but is far from being the cheapest available.

If this customer were to buy a policy from Royal & Sun Alliance instead, he would cut the cost to just £10 a month. Over the full 20 years of the policy, this would make a difference of £5,352, which would mean that his bill would be cut by more than two thirds.

For a woman of 50 wanting the same cover, the savings could be even greater. Her monthly term insurance premium of £77.50 a month with Clerical Medical is again better than the £100 she would pay for a typical whole life policy, but selecting Royal & Sun Alliance would cut the bill to £21.10. Over 20 years this would add up to a saving of £13,536.

Price differences of this size

are far from uncommon for term insurance customers, according to Patrick Bunton, of London & Country. "The term insurance market is now fiercely competitive and we've seen premium reductions of up to 30 per cent since 1992," he said. "Despite this, the gap between the cheapest and most expensive insurers is huge. It is usually possible to cut the higher priced premiums by half through looking elsewhere."

Term assurance is similar to car insurance in that no one company is cheaper for all customers. The only way to find the best deal is to obtain quotes. Time can be saved by using telebrokers to sift through several companies for you.

When hunting for a policy, there are other features to look for besides headline cost. Some insurers guarantee their premiums so that you can be sure of no rise in price. With others, there is nothing to stop the company from raising the rates after you buy the policy, though if this happens you are free to close the agreement and move elsewhere.

Some insurers offer addi-

tional benefits with their deals. Customers may be allowed to claim immediately if they are diagnosed as terminally ill, allowing them the benefit of extra money while they are still alive. Some policies also offer an extra price reduction if you can prove that your job is low risk or if you take a medical test.

Selection of level term assurance premiums on £100,000 policy for men aged 35

Company	Monthly premium
Royal & Sun Alliance	£10.00 TR
Legal & General	£17.40
General Accident	£17.50 T
Standard Life	£18.00
Guardian	£19.80
Commercial Union	£21.50
Canada Life	£23.00 O
Clerical Medical	£32.30

Selection of level term assurance premiums on £100,000 policy for women aged 50

Company	Monthly premium
Royal & Sun Alliance	£21.10 TR
Allied Dunbar	£33.66 TR
Canada Life	£35.50 O
Scottish Widows	£39.40 T
Norwich Union	£41.60 T
Legal & General	£46.00
General Accident	£48.90 T
Clerical Medical	£77.50

Assumes non-smoking.  
T: terminal illness included.  
O: occupation dependent.  
R: premium not guaranteed.  
Source: London & Country Mortgages



Domestic bliss: Although new men do more at home, to replace a wife in her many roles will cost more than £300 a week

## INCOME TAX RATES 1997-98

Taxable income £	Slab rate %	Tax on slab %	Total tax £	£
0-4,100	4,100	20	820	820
4,101-28,100	22.00	23	5,060	5,880
Excess over 28,100	-	40	-	-
Discretionary trusts	-	34	-	-

Tax on savings restricted to 20% for basic taxpayers

## INCOME TAX ALLOWANCES

Income Tax Allowances	1997-98 £	1996-97 £
Personal Allowances		
Under 65 years old	4,045	3,785
65-74 years old	5,220	4,910
75 years old and over	5,400	5,080
Married Couple's Allowance		
Under 65 years old	1,830*	1,790*
65-74 years old	3,185*	3,115*
75 years old and over	3,225*	3,155*
Maximum income before abatement of reliefs for over 65s	15,800	15,200
Additional personal allowance - single-handed responsibility for children	1,830*	£1,790*
Blind person's allowance	1,280	1,250
Widow's bereavement allowance	1,830*	1,790*
Pension Premiums		
Relief is limited to the following percentages of "net relevant earnings" (up to a maximum for personal pensions in 1997-98 of £34,000)		
Age at beginning of tax year	%	Retirement annuities %
Personal pensions		
35 or less	17.5	
36-45	20	
46-50	25	50 or less 17.5
51-55	30	51-55 20
56-60	35	56-60 22.5
61 and over	40	61 and over 27.5
Life assurance benefits contributions element		5

\*Relief restricted to 15%

## CAPITAL GAINS TAX RATES

Exemption £	Tax rate %
Individuals and personal representatives	Income tax rate
Most trusts - interest in possession	23
- discretionary	34

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## THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

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The Child Poverty Action Group has updated three of its benefit books for 1997. The *Jobseeker's Allowance Handbook* gives a clear explanation and evaluation of the benefit that replaced income support for unemployed claimants. The handbook has been expanded to cover changes to the scheme since the benefit was introduced last year. Price £6.95 (reduced to £2.50 for benefit claimants) incl p&p.

The twentieth edition of the *National Welfare Benefits Handbook* includes the latest housing benefit changes for single people under 60. It also covers income support, the social fund and council tax benefit. Price £8.95 (£3 to benefit claimants).

The *Right's Guide* is written for claimants and their advisers. It offers authoritative guidance on non-means-tested benefits and how to claim them. Disability and incapacity benefit, maternity pay and widows' benefits are covered. Price £8.95 (£3 to benefit claimants).

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loans provided by employers are taxable as a benefit in kind for directors and employees earning more than £8,500 a year. The average official rate of interest used to calculate the taxable benefit from a loan to an employee by an employer is 6.93 per cent for 1996-97. There are separate official rates of interest for some loans provided by employers in foreign currencies. For qualifying Japanese yen loans for 1996-97 the rate is 3.9 per cent, and for Swiss franc loans it is 5.5 per cent. Call the Inland Revenue on 0171 438 6420 for further information.

■ PRIVATE pension provision is essential, whether through your employer's scheme or your own private plan - what is at stake is your money and the security of your finances in retirement, says *Pension Power*, a new guide book written by Debbie Harrison. The book takes an in-depth look at all aspects of the pensions subject, answering questions such as what happens to your pension if you are made redundant or declared bankrupt? Published by John Wiley & Sons on April 24, price £13.99.

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Northbrook BS 0500 505000	Instant Access	Instant	£5,000	6.35
Bristol & West BS 0800 901109	Instant Access	Instant	£10,000	6.40

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
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Northbrook BS 0500 505000	Select 60	60 day p	£25,000	6.70
Scarborough BS 0800 580578	Scarborough 100	100 day	£1,000	6.30
Leeds & Holbeck BS 0500 225777	Postal Bonus	30.6.99p	£50,000	7.05

FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)	Account	of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Bank of Ireland (GB) 0800 971971	Fxd-Feeder opt	5 year	£3,000	7.50	F/Yr
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505	Fxd+Feeder a/c	5 year	£8,575	7.50	F/Yr
West Bromwich BS 0990 143668		5 year	£3,000	7.00	Yr
Principality BS 01222 344188		5 year	£500	6.80	Yr

Card type	Interest per month	APR	Fee per annum
RBS Advanta 0800 077770	0.79%N	9.90%N	Nil
Capital One Bank 0800 699000	0.79%N	9.90%N	Nil
Co-operative Bank 100000	0.87%C	10.90%	Nil

## PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs with insurance	Monthly payment on £3,000 for 3yrs no insurance
Northbrook BS 0345 421421	12.90%H	£112.66	£102.59
Lombard Direct 0800 215000	13.90%N	£120.02	£101.20
RBS Direct 0800 121125	14.00%	£114.95	£101.45

Nb. A = APR dependent on credit rating, C = no interest free period, F = Fixed Rate (all other rates variable), H = Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged, N = introductory rate for a limited period, OM = interest paid on maturity, P = by Post only. \* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE. PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING.

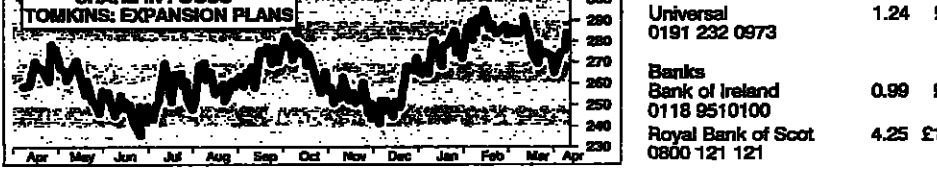
Sources: Moneyfacts, The Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01882 500 677)

## PIBS

FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Birmingham Midshires	6.375%	104.30	8.97%	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.825%	128.36	9.05%	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	143.81	9.05%	100.20	10,000
Bristol & West	13.375%	148.37	9.01%	100.34	1,000
Britannia	13.000%	143.76	9.04%	100.42	1,000
Centenary	12.125%	134.83	8.95%	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	127.50	9.21%	100.25	10,000
Halifax	8.750%	100.83	8.89%	100.82	50,000
Halifax	12.000%	127.10	9.01%	100.14	1,000
Halifax	13.625%	154.70	8.80%	100.00	50,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.375%	148.70	8.99%	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	120.38	8.91%	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.825%	140.71	8.97%	100.45	1,000
Northbrook	12.625%	143.49	8.97%	100.48	1,000
Skipton	12.875%	143.49	8.97%	100.48	1,000

FLOATING RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Cheshire (30/09-27/03) 9.04063%	112.00	100.00	1,000	
First Nat (22/09-20/03) 9.12031%	101.50	100.00	1,000	

PBS = Permanent Interest-bearing shares. Source: ABN AMRO Home Govest - 0171 601 0101



UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE INVESTMENTS

	Bid	Offer	Way	Yld %		Bid	Offer	Way	Yld %
<b>ABN AMRO BANK</b>									
Artkel & Wren 031 159 551				0 + 10					
Admiral Hagl 51	2,910	20,550		2.30					
Admiral Hagl 52	2,910	20,550		2.30					
Admiral Hagl 53	2,910	21,140		2.80					
Admiral Hagl 54	2,910	20,550		1.70					
Admiral Hagl 55	2,910	20,550		1.70					
Admiral Hagl 56	2,910	20,550		1.70					
Admiral Hagl 57	2,910	20,550		1.70					
Admiral Hagl 58	2,910	20,550		1.70					
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Admiral Hagl 220	2,910	20,550		1.70					
Admiral Hagl 221	2,910	20,550</							



WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Profitable Peps — but for whom?

From Mr D.G. Pearson  
Sir, I have always believed that a quick calculation shows there is no real benefit in personal equity plans for most of us. (Typical dividend 5 per cent, tax on this 1 per cent, typical management charge, 1 per cent. Only those for whom capital gains tax is an issue really benefit.)

However, I have only recently realised how very expensive Peps can actually be. My wife holds shares in the BP General Pep, run by Midland Stockbrokers sponsored by BP. Last year, BP provided the option of taking dividends

in new shares rather than in cash. This option is just as available to ordinary shareholders as it is to Pep managers. However, Midland tell me that tax cannot be reclaimed on such scrip issues. The only tax they can reclaim is on the small difference between the full dividend and the value of the whole number of shares allocated — something less than £1.

Midland clearly thought that they deserved a greater reward for this, so last year they increased the annual charge from a flat £10 to 0.3 per cent (about £50 in our case,

and still considerably less than most Peps). Of course, in order to collect their £50 they have to reduce the number of scrip shares and take part of the dividend in cash.

In short, the only service they provide for the management fee is to raise enough cash to collect their fee. Last November's statement read: Scrip dividend 17 shares, Cash dividend £9.65, Management Fees £12.73, Tax Credit reclaimed £2.41.

Yours faithfully,  
D. PEARSON,  
Moravia, Beech Grove,  
Amersham, Buckinghamshire.

The rack for pension providers

From Mr F. Beecheno  
Sir, Referring to John Trayner's very measured letter (a simple way to reduce pension costs, March 22), the time has surely come that personal pensions providers should be coerced further into providing meaningful figures to enable their customers to judge not only their effective charging but also their performance.

The annual pensions statements I have seen are marvels of deceit by omission: no indication of deductions, no comparison of performance. It need not be this way, but I see no sign of pensions companies striving to rectify this second scandal. I recommend an annual face-to-face with pensions representatives to put to them pointed questions over their outrageous charges and pedestrian performance.

Yours faithfully,  
FRANCIS BEECHENO,  
46 South Park Road,  
Wimbledon.

Voting with our feet

From Ms A. Freer  
Sir, I write to support the excellent letter from the Bishop of Beverley (Halifax board has moral duty to disabled, March 29) about the lack of moral responsibility on the part of members of the Board of the Halifax Building Society in denying shares to disabled customers young and old.

I am a friend's receiver and hold her account and my own at the Woolwich, which has the same policy as the Halifax — denial of shares to those whose right it is to have them. There must be hundreds of us who will be moving accounts after the conversion unless their policy is changed by law.

Yours faithfully,  
ANNA FREER,  
39 Hexham Road, SE27.

Keeping up standards

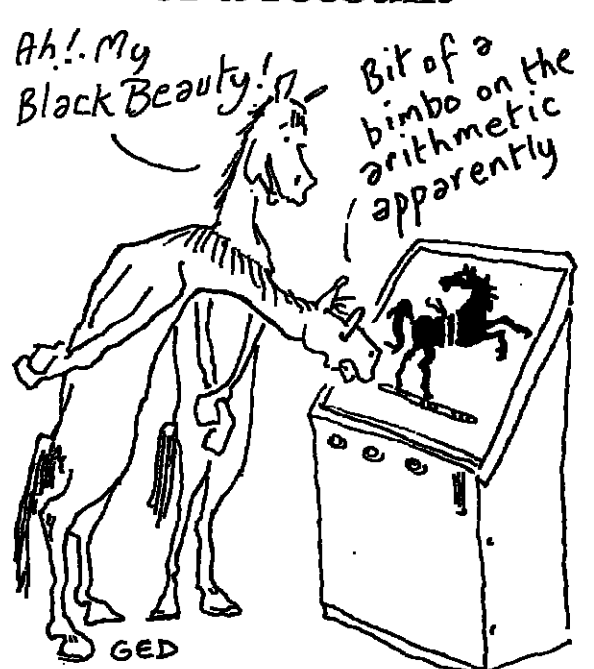
From Mrs N. Bagshaw  
Sir, In reply to Mr Purnell's question "is it always this difficult to get money out of the Scots?" (Scots take their revenge, March 22) — no it is not. My husband had an endowment policy with Standard Life, due to mature on February 15, 1995. The cheque was posted from the Edinburgh office on February 9, in good time to be in our bank account before the maturity date.

Having read various horror stories in the newspapers about delays in maturity payments, we were pleasantly surprised both by the promptness of the issue of the cheque and by the fact that we were kept informed of the procedures involved in the repayment of the mortgage and the progress made, from two months before maturity date.

Yours faithfully,  
NORMA BAGSHAW,  
59 Clement Road,  
Marple Bridge, Stockport.

Letters to Weekend Money can be sent by fax to 0171-787 5882, but The Times regrets it cannot give individual replies. No legal responsibility can be accepted for the advice given in these columns and professional advice should always be sought on investments.

Call for a recount



From Mr R. Breckman  
Sir, A postscript to my recent letters about the efficiency problems at Lloyds Bank. We asked for a certificate of a balance on a client's account.

The certified response was £566. It should have been £193,025. A slight difference of £192,459 but who is counting? Certainly not Lloyds Bank.

Yours faithfully,  
ROBERT BRECKMAN,  
Breckman & Company,  
Chartered Accountants,  
49 South Molton Street, W1.

Societies' scourge plans fourth Bill

Douglas French, the Tory candidate for Gloucester, champion of the rights of building society savers, plans a fourth Private Member's Bill to force converting societies to give free shares to all their customers when they float on the Stock Exchange. This would finally end the injustice done to thousands of savers who have been excluded from building society payouts because they are the second-named holders on accounts. Under current rules, only first-named accountholders benefit.

As an MP, Mr French has demonstrated remarkable skill and luck in piloting two Private Member's Bills through Parliament under its Ten Minute Rule in the past two years. Both sought to extend the scope of payouts from mutual building societies when they float or merge with listed companies. The latest, which enshrined the rights of disabled savers, received Royal Assent just as Parliament was prorogued for the general election. The Times led the campaign for the rights of thousands of disabled savers, unable to manage their own financial affairs who were second-named account

holders at their building societies. In piloting three Bills through the House, Mr French has equalled a record only previously achieved by Roy Jenkins, now Lord Jenkins of Hillhead, and Sir Gerald Nabarro in the 1960s. "I need a third one to see off the opposition," said Mr French. If re-elected, he intends to introduce a one-line amendment making



French equalled the record

his first Act compulsory rather than voluntary. Under the Building Societies (Joint Account Holders) Act 1995, societies can include in their share windfalls savers such as widowers, newlyweds and divorcees who are the named second on joint accounts. Mr French said all the societies that have embarked on demutualisation since the passing of the Joint Holders Act — Alliance & Leicester, Halifax, Northern Rock and Woolwich — had only applied the Act for widowers, on the grounds that it is administratively too complex. "Just a cop out," he said. The Alliance & Leicester has, however, made concessions to its disabled savers and the Northern Rock will pay £1 million into charities for the disabled by way of compensation for the lost payouts.

Mr French, who defends a majority of 6,000, is confident the amendment would be approved as it would not make the Act retrospective and is manifestly just. "The building societies have excluded millions of members from sharing in conversions. They should not get away with it."

GAVIN LUMSDEN

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Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_



\*Source: ATTC Services Ltd to 31/1/97 based on share price total returns on a gold market to mid market basis with net income reinvested and excluding transaction costs. Please remember that past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The value of an investment and the income from it can fall as well as rise as a result of market and currency fluctuations and you may not get back the amount originally invested. Tax assumptions may change if the law changes and the value of tax relief will depend upon your individual circumstances. Henderson Investors is the name under which Henderson Investors Limited and Henderson Investment Funds Limited (both regulated by HMRO and the Personal Investment Authority) and Henderson Administration Limited (regulated by HMRO) provide investment products and services. 3 Pinesbury Avenue, London EC2M 2PL.

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For The Equitable Life, FREEPOST, WILSON STREET, AYLESBURY, BEDFORDSHIRE HP21 7BB. I would welcome information on The Equitable's Free-Standing AVC plans. ☐

NAME (Mr/Ms/Ms) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel (Office) \_\_\_\_\_  
Tel (Home) \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

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Unit Price			Unit Price			Unit Price			Unit Price		
Unit	Price	Change	Unit	Price	Change	Unit	Price	Change	Unit	Price	Change
A & C UNIT TRUSTS											
A&C 1000	100.00	0.00	A&C 2000	200.00	0.00	A&C 3000	300.00	0.00	A&C 4000	400.00	0.00
A&C 5000	500.00	0.00	A&C 6000	600.00	0.00	A&C 7000	700.00	0.00	A&C 8000	800.00	0.00
A&C 9000	900.00	0.00	A&C 10000	1000.00	0.00	A&C 11000	1100.00	0.00	A&C 12000	1200.00	0.00
B & C UNIT TRUSTS											
B&C 1000	100.00	0.00	B&C 2000	200.00	0.00	B&C 3000	300.00	0.00	B&C 4000	400.00	0.00
B&C 5000	500.00	0.00	B&C 6000	600.00	0.00	B&C 7000	700.00	0.00	B&C 8000	800.00	0.00
B&C 9000	900.00	0.00	B&C 10000	1000.00	0.00	B&C 11000	1100.00	0.00	B&C 12000	1200.00	0.00
D & E UNIT TRUSTS											
D&E 1000	100.00	0.00	D&E 2000	200.00	0.00	D&E 3000	300.00	0.00	D&E 4000	400.00	0.00
D&E 5000	500.00	0.00	D&E 6000	600.00	0.00	D&E 7000	700.00	0.00	D&E 8000	800.00	0.00
D&E 9000	900.00	0.00	D&E 10000	1000.00	0.00	D&E 11000	1100.00	0.00	D&E 12000	1200.00	0.00
F & G UNIT TRUSTS											
F&G 1000	100.00	0.00	F&G 2000	200.00	0.00	F&G 3000	300.00	0.00	F&G 4000	400.00	0.00
F&G 5000	500.00	0.00	F&G 6000	600.00	0.00	F&G 7000	700.00	0.00	F&G 8000	800.00	0.00
F&G 9000	900.00	0.00	F&G 10000	1000.00	0.00	F&G 11000	1100.00	0.00	F&G 12000	1200.00	0.00
H & I UNIT TRUSTS											
H&I 1000	100.00	0.00	H&I 2000	200.00	0.00	H&I 3000	300.00	0.00	H&I 4000	400.00	0.00
H&I 5000	500.00	0.00	H&I 6000	600.00	0.00	H&I 7000	700.00	0.00	H&I 8000	800.00	0.00
H&I 9000	900.00	0.00	H&I 10000	1000.00	0.00	H&I 11000	1100.00	0.00	H&I 12000	1200.00	0.00
J & K UNIT TRUSTS											
J&K 1000	100.00	0.00	J&K 2000	200.00	0.00	J&K 3000	300.00	0.00	J&K 4000	400.00	0.00
J&K 5000	500.00	0.00	J&K 6000	600.00	0.00	J&K 7000	700.00	0.00	J&K 8000	800.00	0.00
J&K 9000	900.00	0.00	J&K 10000	1000.00	0.00	J&K 11000	1100.00	0.00	J&K 12000	1200.00	0.00
L & M UNIT TRUSTS											
L&M 1000	100.00	0.00	L&M 2000	200.00	0.00	L&M 3000	300.00	0.00	L&M 4000	400.00	0.00
L&M 5000	500.00	0.00	L&M 6000	600.00	0.00	L&M 7000	700.00	0.00	L&M 8000	800.00	0.00
L&M 9000	900.00	0.00	L&M 10000	1000.00	0.00	L&M 11000	1100.00	0.00	L&M 12000	1200.00	0.00
N & O UNIT TRUSTS											
N&O 1000	100.00	0.00	N&O 2000	200.00	0.00	N&O 3000	300.00	0.00	N&O 4000	400.00	0.00
N&O 5000	500.00	0.00	N&O 6000	600.00	0.00	N&O 7000	700.00	0.00	N&O 8000	800.00	0.00
N&O 9000	900.00	0.00	N&O 10000	1000.00	0.00	N&O 11000	1100.00	0.00	N&O 12000	1200.00	0.00
P & Q UNIT TRUSTS											
P&Q 1000	100.00	0.00	P&Q 2000	200.00	0.00	P&Q 3000	300.00	0.00	P&Q 4000	400.00	0.00
P&Q 5000	500.00	0.00	P&Q 6000	600.00	0.00	P&Q 7000	700.00	0.00	P&Q 8000	800.00	0.00
P&Q 9000	900.00	0.00	P&Q 10000	1000.00	0.00	P&Q 11000	1100.00	0.00	P&Q 12000	1200.00	0.00
R & S UNIT TRUSTS											
R&S 1000	100.00	0.00	R&S 2000	200.00	0.00	R&S 3000	300.00	0.00	R&S 4000	400.00	0.00
R&S 5000	500.00	0.00	R&S 6000	600.00	0.00	R&S 7000	700.00	0.00	R&S 8000	800.00	0.00
R&S 9000	900.00	0.00	R&S 10000	1000.00	0.00	R&S 11000	1100.00	0.00	R&S 12000	1200.00	0.00
T & U UNIT TRUSTS											
T&U 1000	100.00	0.00	T&U 2000	200.00	0.00	T&U 3000	300.00	0.00	T&U 4000	400.00	0.00
T&U 5000	500.00	0.00	T&U 6000	600.00	0.00	T&U 7000	700.00	0.00	T&U 8000	800.00	0.00
T&U 9000	900.00	0.00	T&U 10000	1000.00	0.00	T&U 11000	1100.00	0.00	T&U 12000	1200.00	0.00
V & W UNIT TRUSTS											
V&W 1000	100.00	0.00	V&W 2000	200.00	0.00	V&W 3000	300.00	0.00	V&W 4000	400.00	0.00
V&W 5000	500.00	0.00	V&W 6000	600.00	0.00	V&W 7000	700.00	0.00	V&W 8000	800.00	0.00
V&W 9000	900.00	0.00	V&W 10000	1000.00	0.00	V&W 11000	1100.00	0.00	V&W 12000	1200.00	0.00
X & Y UNIT TRUSTS											
X&Y 1000	100.00	0.00	X&Y 2000	200.00	0.00	X&Y 3000	300.00	0.00	X&Y 4000	400.00	0.00
X&Y 5000	500.00	0.00	X&Y 6000	600.00	0.00	X&Y 7000	700.00	0.00	X&Y 8000	800.00	0.00
X&Y 9000	900.00	0.00	X&Y 10000	1000.00	0.00	X&Y 11000	1100.00	0.00	X&Y 12000	1200.00	0.00
Z & AA UNIT TRUSTS											
Z&AA 1000	100.00	0.00	Z&AA 2000	200.00	0.00	Z&AA 3000	300.00	0.00	Z&AA 4000	400.00	0.00
Z&AA 5000	500.00	0.00	Z&AA 6000	600.00	0.00	Z&AA 7000	700.00	0.00	Z&AA 8000	800.00	0.00
Z&AA 9000	900.00	0.00	Z&AA 10000	1000.00	0.00	Z&AA 11000	1100.00	0.00	Z&AA 12000	1200.00	0.00

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## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982	1981	1980	1979	1978	1977	1976	1975	1974	1973	1972	1971	1970	1969	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1963	1962	1961	1960	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953	1952	1951	1950	1949	1948	1947	1946	1945	1944	1943	1942	1941	1940	1939	1938	1937	1936	1935	1934	1933	1932	1931	1930	1929	1928	1927	1926	1925	1924	1923	1922	1921	1920	1919	1918	1917	1916	1915	1914	1913	1912	1911	1910	1909	1908	1907	1906	1905	1904	1903	1902	1901	1900	1899	1898	1897	1896	1895	1894	1893	1892	1891	1890	1889	1888	1887	1886	1885	1884	1883	1882	1881	1880	1879	1878	1877	1876	1875	1874	1873	1872	1871	1870	1869	1868	1867	1866	1865	1864	1863	1862	1861	1860	1859	1858	1857	1856	1855	1854	1853	1852	1851	1850	1849	1848	1847	1846	1845	1844	1843	1842	1841	1840	1839	1838	1837	1836	1835	1834	1833	1832	1831	1830	1829	1828	1827	1826	1825	1824	1823	1822	1821	1820	1819	1818	1817	1816	1815	1814	1813	1812	1811	1810	1809	1808	1807	1806	1805	1804	1803	1802	1801	1800	1799	1798	1797	1796	1795	1794	1793	1792	1791	1790	1789	1788	1787	1786	1785	1784	1783	1782	1781	1780	1779	1778	1777	1776	1775	1774	1773	1772	1771	1770	1769	1768	1767	1766	1765	1764	1763	1762	1761	1760	1759	1758	1757	1756	1755	1754	1753	1752	1751	1750	1749	1748	1747	1746	1745	1744	1743	1742	1741	1740	1739	1738	1737	1736	1735	1734	1733	1732	1731	1730	1729	1728	1727	1726	1725	1724	1723	1722	1721	1720	1719	1718	1717	1716	1715	1714	1713	1712	1711	1710	1709	1708	1707	1706	1705	1704	1703	1702	1701	1700	1699	1698	1697	1696	1695	1694	1693	1692	1691	1690	1689	1688	1687	1686	1685	1684	1683	1682	1681	1680	1679	1678	1677	1676	1675	1674	1673	1672	1671	1670	1669	1668	1667	1666	1665	1664	1663	1662	1661	1660	1659	1658	1657	1656	1655	1654	1653	1652	1651	1650	1649	1648	1647	1646	1645	1644	1643	1642	1641	1640	1639	1638	1637	1636	1635	1634	1633	1632	1631	1630	1629	1628	1627	1626	1625	1624	1623	1622	1621	1620	1619	1618	1617	1616	1615	1614	1613	1612	1611	1610	1609	1608	1607	1606	1605	1604	1603	1602	1601	1600	1599	1598	1597	1596	1595	1594	1593	1592	1591	1590	1589	1588	1587	1586	1585	1584	1583	1582	1581	1580	1579	1578	1577	1576	1575	1574	1573	1572	1571	1570	1569	1568	1567	1566	1565	1564	1563	1562	1561	1560	1559	1558	1557	1556	1555	1554	1553	1552	1551	1550	1549	1548	1547	1546	1545	1544	1543	1542	1541	1540	1539	1538	1537	1536	1535	1534	1533	1532	1531	1530	1529	1528	1527	1526	1525	1524	1523	1522	1521	1520	1519	1518	1517	1516	1515	1514	1513	1512	1511	1510	1509	1508	1507	1506	1505	1504	1503	1502	1501	1500	1499	1498	1497	1496	1495	1494	1493	1492	1491	1490	1489	1488	1487	1486	1485	1484	1483	1482	1481	1480	1479	1478	1477	1476	1475	1474	1473	1472	1471	1470	1469	1468	1467	1466	1465	1464	1463	1462	1461	1460	1459	1458	1457	1456	1455	1454	1453	1452	1451	1450	1449	1448	1447	1446	1445	1444	1443	1442	1441	1440	1439	1438	1437	1436	1435	1434	1433	1432	1431	1430	1429	1428	1427	1426	1425	1424	1423	1422	1421	1420	1419	1418	1417	1416	1415	1414	1413	1412	1411	1410	1409	1408	1407	1406	1405	1404	1403	1402	1401	1400	1399	1398	1397	1396	1395	1394	1393	1392	1391	1390	1389	1388	1387	1386	1385	1384	1383	1382	1381	1380	1379	1378	1377	1376	1375	1374	1373	1372	1371	1370	1369	1368	1367	1366	1365	1364	1363	1362	1361	1360	1359	1358	1357	1356	1355	1354	1353	1352	1351	1350	1349	1348	1347	1346	1345	1344	1343	1342	1341	1340	1339	1338	1337	1336	1335	1334	1333	1332	1331	1330	1329	1328	1327	1326	1325	1324	1323	1322	1321	1320	1319	1318	1317	1316	1315	1314	1313	1312	1311	1310	1309	1308	1307	1306	1305	1304	1303	1302	1301	1300	1299	1298	1297	1296	1295	1294	1293	1292	1291	1290	1289	1288	1287	1286	1285	1284	1283	1282	1281	1280	1279	1278	1277	1276	1275	1274	1273	1272	1271	1270	1269	1268	1267	1266	1265	1264	1263	1262	1261	1260	1259	1258	1257	1256	1255	1254	1253	1252	1251	1250	1249	1248	1247	1246	1245	1244	1243	1242	1241	1240	1239	1238	1237	1236	1235	1234	1233	1232	1231	1230	1229	1228	1227	1226	1225	1224	1223	1222	1221	1220	1219	1218	1217	1216	1215	1214	1213	1212	1211	1210	1209	1208	1207	1206	1205	1204	1203	1202	1201	1200	1199	1198	1197	1196	1195	1194	1193	1192	1191	1190	1189	1188	1187	1186	1185	1184	1183	1182	1181	1180	1179	1178	1177	1176	1175	1174	1173	1172	1171	1170	1169	1168	1167	1166	1165	1164	1163	1162	1161	1160	1159	1158	1157	1156	1155	1154	1153	1152	1151	1150	1149	1148	1147	1146	1145	1144	1143	1142	1141	1140	1139	1138	1137	1136	1135	1134	1133	1132	1131	1130	1129	1128	1127	1126	1125	1124	1123	1122	1121	1120	1119	1118	1117	1116	1115	1114	1113	1112	1111	1110	1109	1108	1107	1106	1105	1104	1103	1102	1101	1100	1099	1098	1097	1096	1095	1094	1093	1092	1091	1090	1089	1088	1087	1086	1085	1084	1083	1082	1081	1080	1079	1078	1077	1076	1075	1074	1073	1072	1071	1070	1069	1068	1067	1066	1065	1064	1063	1062	1061	1060	1059	1058	1057	1056	1055	1054	1053	1052	1051	1050	1049	1048	1047	1046	1045	1044	1043	1042	1041	1040	1039	1038	1037	1036	1035	1034	1033	1032	1031	1030	1029	1028	1027	1026	1025	1024	1023	1022	1021	1020	1019	1018	1017	1016	1015	1014	1013	1012	1011	1010	1009	1008	1007	1006	1005	1004	1003	1002	1001	1000	999	998	997	996	995	994	993	992	991	990	989	988	987	986	985	984	983	982	981	980	979	978	977	976	975	974	973	972	971	970	969	968	967	966	965	964	963	962	961	960	959	958	957	956	955	954	953	952	951	950	949	948	947	946	945	944	943	942	941	940	939	938	937	936	935	934	933	932	931	930	929	928	927	926	925	924	923	922	921	920	919	918	917	916	915	914	913	912	911	910	909	908	907	906	905	904	903	902	901	900	899	898	897	896	895	894	893	892	891	890	889	888	887	886	885	884	883	882	881	880	879	878	877	876	875	874	873	872	871	870	869	868	867	866	865	864	863	862	861	860	859	858	857	856	855	854	853	852	851	850	849	848	847	846	845	844	843	842	841	840	839	838	837	836	835	834	833	832	831	830	829	828	827	826	825	824	823	822	821	820	819	818	817	816	815	814	813	812	811	810	809	808	807	806	805	804	803	802	801	800	799	798	797	796	795	794	793	792	791	790	789	788	787	786	785	784	783	782	781	780	779	778	777	776	775	774	773	772	771	770	769	768	767	766	765	764	763	762	761	760	759	758	757	756	755	754	753	752	751	750	749	748	747	746	745	744	743	742	741	740	739	738	737	736	735	734	733	732	731	730	729	728	727	726	725	724	723	722	721	720	719	718	717	716	715	714	713	712	711	710	709	708	707	706	705	704	703	702	701	700	699	698	697	696	695	694	693	692	691	690	689	688	687	686	685	684	683	682	681	680	679	678	677	676	675	674	673	672	671	670	669	668	667	666	665	664	663	662	661	660	659	658	657	656	655	654	653	652	651	650	649	648	647	646	645	644	643	642	641	640	639	638	637	636	635	634	633	632	631	630	629	628	627	626	625	624	623	622	621	620	619	618	617	616	615	614	613	612	611	610	60
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RACING: WORKWATCHERS ON DAWN PATROL AS CECIL-TRAINED FILLY FACES CRUCIAL GALLOP

## Early risers in search of Sleepytime

By JULIAN MUSCAT

WORKWATCHERS at Newmarket will be out in force this weekend when Sleepytime, whose midweek absence from the gallops alarmed supporters of the 1,000 Guineas favourite, resumes fast work in preparation for the fillies' classic on May 4.

After three days on the easy list, Sleepytime must come through a strenuous workout to secure her place in the Fred Darling Stakes, her selected prep race at Newbury on Friday. Tote Cherry-Downes, racing manager to Sleepytime's owner, Greenway Stables, said yesterday the hold-up had not compromised her prospects, and that the filly never succumbed to the lung infection afflicting a small minority of Henry Cecil's string.

"I expect she will work this weekend - possibly on Sunday if Henry wants an extra day before galloping her," Cherry-Downes said. "She was trotting around Side Hill on Thursday and was out again on Friday so it is not as if she has been inactive."

"Sleepytime has always been totally clear of any problem and recent tests have confirmed that," he continued. "If you work horses when they're affected, then you can ruin them. It is good stable practice to test others if one horse shows up with mucus on the lungs. That is all Henry was doing."

Sleepytime's full-brother, Ali-Royal, is to contest the Earl



Sleepytime must please in a weekend workout to run in the Fred Darling Stakes. Photograph: Hugh Routledge

Of Sifton Stakes at Newmarket on Wednesday - although Cherry-Downes said the four-year-old goes best with cut in the ground.

Cecil's two runners at Nottingham yesterday failed to collect. Courtship ran disap-

pointingly behind Sekari in the Levy Board Stakes but Barrier Ridge fared better in the Basingfold Maiden Stakes, chasing home the more experienced China Red.

Doubtless there will be relief all round when Cecil posts his

first winner of the present campaign.

No such tribulations surround Cricquet Head's stable in Chantilly. Mme Head yesterday expressed herself "very satisfied" with her 1,000 Guineas candidate, Pas De

Reponse, who galloped to a bloodless victory in the three-year-old Prix Imprudence over seven furlongs at Maisons-Laffitte.

The Danzig filly made all to win by 2½ lengths from Barnata.

Ladbroke's to trim Pas De Reponse's classic odds to 6-1, from a point longer. "She does everything so easily at home that I told Freddie (Head) to make sure she had a good bit of work today," Mme Head said. "She should be in perfect shape for the 1,000 Guineas. I couldn't be happier."

There was British success in the colts' equivalent, the Prix Djebel, when Clive Britain's raider, Fantastic Fellow, made all to beat Nombrie Premier comfortably by threequarters of a length. Tomba, from Brian Meehan's stable, was fourth.

Fantastic Fellow may return to France for the Poule d'Essai des Poulains, although the colt is also entered at Newmarket. Britain said his charge had thrived over the winter but this victory paid tribute to Bahamian Bounty, who had Fantastic Fellow just over a length back in fourth place in the Middle Park Stakes. Now trained by Godolphin, Bahamian Bounty is expected to line up in the French classic on his return from Dubai.

Fantastic Fellow was yesterday among six late entrants to the Derby at Epsom in June. His prospects of staying 12 furlongs are minimal but he joins Desert King, Johan Cruyff, Lalomene, Panama City and Revoque, the champion juvenile of Europe, in the Derby melting pot. Owners of the sextet contributed an extra £64,000 in entry fees towards the event, which is expected to carry prize-money of £1 million for the first time.

THE TIMES SATURDAY APRIL 12 1997

## ASCOT

2.00 Serious	3.40 Garwin
2.35 Storm Alert	4.20 Darbyden
3.10 Trainglot	5.00 STRUGGLES GLORY (nap)
Carl Evans: 5.00 Struggles Glory.	5.35 Fasil

## GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101	113143	GOOD TIMES 13 (B.F.S.S.) (Mrs D Robinson) 8 Hk 12-0	8 West (7)	88
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Record number 5-figure form (F - fill, P - pulled up, U - unplaced rider, B - brought down, S - dropped up, R - refused, D - disqualified). Horse's name Days since last owned, F or P (B - blinkers, V - visor, H - hood, E - eyeblink, C - course winner, D - hood, E - eyeblink, C - course, and distance winner, EF - beaten favourite in latest race). Gaining on which horse has won (F - firm, good in form, hard, G - good, S - seek, good to sell, heavy). Owner in brackets. Trainer, Age and weight. Rider plus any allowance. The Times Press Handicapper's rating.







where in  
goal as  
biggest  
week  
actions

Dyche  
F. 100



## Roberts in goal as biggest week beckons

By Peter Ball

MIDDLESBROUGH have been bedevilled with injuries for most of the season. There is no change tomorrow, as they embark on the most momentous four days in the club's history without their captain, Nigel Pearson, and with their new £1.3 million goalkeeper, Mark Schwarzer, on crutches. Schwarzer is ineligible for the FA Cup semi-final against Chelsea tomorrow, but he is now also doubtful for the Coca-Cola Cup final replay on Wednesday. His replacement will be Ben Roberts, 21, who began the season as the club's third-choice goalkeeper, but had just claimed a first-team place when Schwarzer was signed.

"I hope to show I can do it on the big occasion," Roberts said yesterday. "You've got to be confident in yourself, otherwise you freeze. I'm really looking forward to Sunday. My mind has been on it for



weeks — it's the biggest game of my career."

Bryan Robson also has confidence in his goalkeeper. "I've no worries about Ben," the Middlesbrough manager said. "His temperament is very good. He's so cool."

The loss of Pearson and Stamp, added to the absence of Cox, who is suspended, means that Robson is again facing changes for what he describes, with a relegation battle against Sunderland next weekend, as "the biggest week in the club's history."

He added: "I seem to be saying that every week, but I don't mind repeating it to the players. We can make club history by reaching the FA Cup Final for the first time. I want to win the FA Cup, because I want us to be in the Cup Winners' Cup next season rather than the UEFA Cup — it's easier to win."

He would be ill-advised to say that around Anfield, but Robson is delighted with the venue for the game tomorrow. "We will respect Chesterfield," he said, "but the great thing for us is that the game is at Old Trafford, where the pitch is good, and that will suit us."

# Keeper shapes up on a diet of chips

NEIL SULLIVAN

## THE FACE OF FOOTBALL



By Russell Kempson

Several influential Scottish observers said it, too, their poison pens dripping with anti-Anglo vitriol. How could Brown pick a southern-southern Sassenach who had dared to reveal in McAllister's misery? Sullivan chuckles, which he does frequently. He has a disarming nature, appears at ease in any company. Crazy Gang or otherwise, and recalls the controversy with little more than amusement. "It was only one or two people who got upset," he said. "It affected me a bit at first but once I had spoken to Craig about it, everything was fine. The real Scottish supporters have been superb."

Other cynics might claim that Sullivan is ideally qualified for the Scotland goalkeeping jersey after his much-highlighted errors, in successive matches, against Manchester United and Newcastle United at the start of this season. David Beckham, the Manchester United midfielder player, outrageously lobbed the ball over him from inside the United half. David Barty, of Newcastle United, chipped in



Catch of the day: Sullivan, the Wimbledon goalkeeper, is ready for the challenge presented by Chelsea tomorrow

his ill-directed headed clearance from 25 yards. Again, he chuckles at the memories. "With Beckham's shot, I knew it was going to be close as soon as he hit it. Then I thought: 'Hello, it's getting closer.' Then I thought: 'I'm not going to get it.' It must have dropped an inch under the crossbar ... but at least I'm going to be on television for the next 50 years."

His team-mates still rib him about his place in history and, during training, often attempt to beat him from the halfway line. He has also had his

training shoes nailed to the floor and Deep Heat surreptitiously smeared in his underpants. "I suppose it's all part of our tradition," he said.

Though he denies taking a ringleader's role in such pranks — "I just watch it all go on," he said, albeit unconvincingly — he admits a deep-rooted affection for the Wimbledon way. He joined the club in his early teens, as a goalkeeper, yet still turned out for Oakway Ajax, in the local Morden youth league, as a midfielder player. "At that age, you just want to play football,"

he said. "You don't care where you play." Decision day arrived when, at 14, the Junction Tavern pub side from nearby Raynes Park called on his talents. "It was good fun for a while but when you've got a six-foot bruiser full of beer bearing down on you, you know it's time to get serious. I had to give it up, the club wouldn't let me play for them any more."

Sullivan accepts that he still has much to learn — he earned a regular first-team slot only last season, having twice recovered from a broken leg,

and has yet to start a game after three Scotland call-ups. He also owes much to his parents, Pamela and Terry. "When I was a lad, they drove me everywhere," he said. "I can remember them watching me from the touchline, standing there freezing. They were brilliant."

Campbell has helped, too, his Glaswegian roots opening the international door for his grandson to squeeze through. The irony is not lost on Sullivan: seven years ago, Campbell moved to Wimbledon. He still lives there.

## Dyche steps out of shadows to bask in limelight

For six years, Sean Dyche has wondered whether tomorrow would ever come. Since leaving Nottingham Forest in 1991 in search of regular first-team football, he has hunkered after the big stage that hosts matches of true importance. His day is about to dawn. Dyche, 25, will lead out Chesterfield in the FA Cup semi-final against Middlesbrough at Old Trafford tomorrow. The game has gripped the townfolk like no other in the club's 131-year history. Before this season, Chesterfield had never progressed beyond the fifth round and had not even gone

that far since 1950. Now they are just 90 minutes away from Wembley.

As a trainee at Forest, Dyche, a central defender, was surrounded by some of the most successful professionals of the late 1980s and early 1990s. He saw Brian Clough assemble a side that included Des Walker, Steve Hodge, Neil Webb, Stuart Pearce and Nigel Clough and almost challenged for the title.

While he stayed on the right side of the manager, even to the point of helping Clough to tend the roses at his home in Quarndon, Dyche gradually realised that he would not break into the side. "I was

## Richard Hobson meets the Chesterfield captain finally making the big time

No 41 out of 41 professionals and, even though I had a lot of affection for the place and the people there, I had to leave." Clough smoothed his passage to Chesterfield on a free transfer, then managed by Paul Hart, a former Forest defender, whose thoughts on the game echoed those of his mentor. More than 200 League appearances later, Dyche still keeps the Clough philosophy in mind.

"Without any question, he is the most amazing man

within the game I have ever come across," he said. "His great strength was that everything he said was so simple to understand and he was not as frightening as people have said. You find a lot of players leave Premier League clubs, as they now are, without getting near the team, but they have had such a good grounding they can cope immediately in another division."

The gulf between the big clubs and the smaller fry was massive then, but Dyche

points to the progress of Chesterfield, and Stockport in the Coca-Cola Cup, as evidence that the gap is not widening as quickly as is commonly believed. Such a view is countered by the difference in earnings between Dyche and Fabrizio Ravanelli, the man he will mark tomorrow.

"His wage only affects me in that I wish it was mine," Dyche said. "To be fair, if his goals can take them so far in the two big cup competitions and keep them in the Premier League, he is probably worth £420,000 per week."

Dyche missed the fifth-round tie against Forest

because of a hamstring injury and was undergoing rehabilitation when the Cup was photographed for a photo-shoot before the quarter-final against Wrexham. He managed to make contact with the trophy in a separate event with Tony Humes, the Wrexham captain.

"We were lining up for pictures and the guy from the Football Association said we did not have to touch it if we were superstitious. I just hugged it. I cannot see that touching a piece of silverware is going to make us lose a game," Dyche said. It was the only time that he mentioned the word "lose".

## Evans still to come to terms with Anfield's problems

By David Maddock

SITTING in the glare of television arc lights after Liverpool's wretched 3-0 defeat in Paris, Roy Evans appeared transfixed by the events that had unfolded around him. Yesterday morning, after a fretful sleep, he had clearly still in his bones the terms with the implications of the reverse — their worst in Europe for 18 years — against Paris Saint-Germain in the first leg of their Cup Winners' Cup semi-final on Wednesday.

Evans has tried to explain away the performance, and admits that he cannot. His side was simply too slow, in thought and movement, against opponents whose own standards were put into perspective by a 6-1 home thrashing from Juventus earlier in the season. The manager's shock was perhaps an indication of how devastating there are fundamental problems at Anfield that cannot be rectified this season.

All season, Evans has argued that Barnes and Redknapp can play together, just as he has insisted that Fowler and Collymore are compatible. The evidence of Thursday evening would suggest otherwise and the manager's abiding faith may be his undoing.

Then there is the question of David James. He is a complex man, a player who thinks deeply — too deeply — about his performances and a player who thrives on confidence. That is shattered at present, but in indicating that the goalkeeper will still play against Sunderland tomorrow, Evans admitted that he has few alternatives.

The match in Paris was the first of four games in nine days for Liverpool, a sequence that will decide their fate this season. Evans, however, was trying to muster some energy to rouse his players. "This is now a big, big week because we are still very much in contention in the Premiership," he said.

The impression lingers, however, that should Liverpool fall now, the question of why has taken Evans until the final six games of the season to realise that he has inherent problems must be asked. It will be the board of directors asking such a question should Liverpool fail to finish in the top two in the Premiership.

## COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

FOOTBALL									
Kick-off 3.00 unless stated or denotes all-Ireland match Premier division matches in brackets									
FA Caring Premiership									
(1) Arsenal v Leicester	(2) Blackburn v Manchester Utd	(3) Derby v Aston Villa	(4) Everton v Tottenham	(5) Southampton v West Ham	(6) Arsenal v Leicester	(7) Blackburn v Manchester Utd	(8) Derby v Aston Villa	(9) Everton v Tottenham	(10) Southampton v West Ham
P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts
1 Arsenal 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	2 Blackburn 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	3 Derby 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	4 Everton 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	5 Southampton 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	6 Arsenal 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	7 Blackburn 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	8 Derby 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	9 Everton 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	10 Southampton 32 17 9 5 54 28 60
Second division									
(11) Bolton v Bury	(12) Burnley v Gillingham	(13) Charlton v Luton	(14) Colchester v Notts County	(15) Crewe v Shrewsbury	(16) Exeter v Reading	(17) Grimsby v Millwall	(18) Huddersfield v Middlesbrough	(19) Ipswich v Peterborough	(20) Lincoln v Oldham
P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts
1 Bolton 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	2 Burnley 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	3 Charlton 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	4 Colchester 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	5 Crewe 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	6 Exeter 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	7 Grimsby 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	8 Huddersfield 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	9 Ipswich 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	10 Lincoln 32 17 9 5 54 28 60
Third division									
(21) Brighton v Wigan	(22) Cardiff v Chester	(23) Exeter v Reading	(24) Grimsby v Millwall	(25) Huddersfield v Middlesbrough	(26) Ipswich v Peterborough	(27) Lincoln v Oldham	(28) Notts County v Wycombe	(29) Shrewsbury v Walsley	(30) Stockport v Burnley
P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts
21 Brighton 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	22 Cardiff 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	23 Exeter 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	24 Grimsby 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	25 Huddersfield 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	26 Ipswich 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	27 Lincoln 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	28 Notts County 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	29 Shrewsbury 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	30 Stockport 32 17 9 5 54 28 60
Fourth division									
(31) Barnet v Dagenham	(32) Boreham Wood v Hemel Hempstead	(33) Chesham v Slough	(34) Ebbsfleet v Havant	(35) Enfield v Grays	(36) Farnham v Maidstone	(37) Gillingham v Maidstone	(38) Harlow v Stevenage	(39) Hemel Hempstead v Slough	(40) Hemel Hempstead v Slough
P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts
31 Barnet 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	32 Boreham Wood 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	33 Chesham 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	34 Ebbsfleet 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	35 Enfield 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	36 Farnham 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	37 Gillingham 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	38 Harlow 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	39 Hemel Hempstead 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	40 Hemel Hempstead 32 17 9 5 54 28 60
Fifth division									
(41) Boreham Wood v Hemel Hempstead	(42) Chesham v Slough	(43) Ebbsfleet v Havant	(44) Enfield v Grays	(45) Farnham v Maidstone	(46) Gillingham v Maidstone	(47) Harlow v Stevenage	(48) Hemel Hempstead v Slough	(49) Hemel Hempstead v Slough	(50) Hemel Hempstead v Slough
P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts	P W D L F A Pts
41 Boreham Wood 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	42 Chesham 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	43 Ebbsfleet 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	44 Enfield 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	45 Farnham 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	46 Gillingham 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	47 Harlow 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	48 Hemel Hempstead 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	49 Hemel Hempstead 32 17 9 5 54 28 60	50 Hemel Hempstead 32 17 9 5 54 28 60



# Rob Hughes watches golf's latest phenomenon make his mark in the first round

## Tiger roars back to master Augusta

When Tiger Woods stepped off the 18th green at Augusta on Thursday, his first round at the Masters as a professional golfer, it was no exaggeration at all to feel the pull of destiny around him. The gallery he attracts is almost a danger to him and he admits "it gets scary when you look back and you see adults getting pushy, and little kids getting trampled down".

There is, of course, security, and Woods is already secure in the millions of dollars that the almost fanatical acclaim has quickly brought him. When he came down the back nine of this extraordinary course on Thursday — where he made an eagle-three at the 15th and birdies at four of the other holes — he became one

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of only 12 men ever to record 30 for those nine holes — six under par.

After taking 40 for the front nine, his remarkable turnaround gave him a first-round score of 70, two under par. He will win this tournament if he sustains anything like that form. If he does not capture the Masters this weekend, then Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer are all the witnesses you need to state that this young player will definitely be the master in the future.

We cannot begin to unravel the nature-nurture conundrum as to whether golfing ability this great is born or made. Allegedly, Tiger was six months old when people observed him eyeing his father's golf balls into a net in the garage. He was two when he appeared on *The Mike Douglas Show* on US television, putting with Bob Hope. He shot 48 for nine holes at the age of three... and it goes on.

the profiling of an infant turning into a boy, graduating into a student at Stanford University and reaching the precipice of greatness as a slender 6ft 2in apprentice to the gods of golf.

His tournament winnings already top \$1 million and are dwarfed by the \$40 million per annum that Nike pays him to claim the very ground that he treads, to make him an icon. At 21, he has his own foundation and he intends, if ever there is time, to give clinics. Meanwhile, he is fully engaged, searching for something close to perfection, close to the round of 59 on his own local course that demonstrated his form coming into the Masters.

For one whose frame is almost whipper-lean, he produces a power that flies the ball farther than any of his fellow professionals. His right leg stands very square and strong, the power develops through the torque of his upper body and the swing is almost ferociously fast, but clean. It looks free of stress, free of mechanism: it looks like nature's work.

And when the course plays the devil's game with him, when a ball tips the cup, he shows exasperation. He blows out his cheeks and in an instant it is gone. The look in the dark eyes is that of a child momentarily thwarted and then, as if with a shrug of resignation, he marches on: the next hole, the next challenge to his destiny.

People here remind him of Jackie Robinson, who, 50 years ago as a baseball player, broke the barrier of American sporting prejudice. Robinson, Woods is aware, was a very fine and obsessed golfer, also. When the phenomenon that is Woods is compared to the prowess of Bob Beamon, Carl Lewis, Muhammad Ali, it is curious that the name of Arthur Ashe is missing. Surely it is Ashe, who obliged people in the once similarly pristine, white world of tennis to acknowledge his game, his dignity and his intellect, who should be the role model for this modern-day sensation?

There was something of



Bridge of highs: Woods walks across the creek at the 13th on his way to a six-under-par 30 for the back nine and a first-round score of 70

Ashe, the burning inside but a phlegmatic outward appearance, when Woods played his most accomplished stroke of the first round. It came, not on the back nine, but at the par-five 8th, where Woods took bogey.

He hooked his tee-shot into the dogwoods and pines to the left of this uphill hole. The ball rested on dirt one foot to the right of a cart track. He picked out a seven-iron as he looked towards the top of the tall pines. "Initially, I was going to

hit and hope," he said later. "Then I saw this little gap." Exchanging his club for a six-iron, he then deftly guided the ball through two trees and safely back into a playable position. He had stood with his left foot against a kerb, his right on the asphalt cart track; he had negotiated ten trees; he was on course for a great recovery.

"I knew what I had been doing wrong in the outward nine," Woods said. "I was in such a bad position at the

top of my backswing. After I realised that, it was just a matter of trusting the motion."

Whether he can trust the media and the public to watch him progress without envy is another matter. Yesterday the press was already highlighting the overselling of Woods by Nike and by International Management Group, who last Sunday paid for a one-hour television commercial "Tiger Woods: Son, Hero, Champion". And by his father, Earl

Woods, who had gloated in the magazine, *Sports Illustrated*, that "Tiger will do more than any other man in history to change the course of humanity".

Will no one let Woods grow into his apparent destiny? "He's a young man of 21," Nicklaus said. "People are expecting him to handle it like a 35-year-old. They monitor every move, I didn't have that: nobody monitored the \$33 I won in my first week."

Palmer, who shot his worst

two rounds in 43 years as a competitor at Augusta for a two-round aggregate of 176, 32 over par, asked: "How many 20-year-old men are in the position of Tiger Woods?" The young man had complained that he has not had the time or freedom to be a normal 21-year-old. "Hey," Palmer told him, "that's the price you have to pay, whether it's financial or as a champion."

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright, let us hope you do not blow out like candlelight.

SWIMMING: PALMER AND WILSON FAIL TO HIT QUALIFYING MARK AFTER BECOMING EMBROILED IN TACTICAL STRUGGLE

## Smith earns rightful reward for bold approach

By CRAIG LORD

BRITAIN is blessed with three world-class ironmen, the loners who devote themselves to the 1,500 metres freestyle, the longest race in the pool. In Sheffield yesterday only one of them, Graeme Smith, had the steel to qualify for the European championships, which take place in Seville in August. Winner of the Olympic

bronze medal in Atlanta, the 21-year-old undergraduate was determined not to get caught in a cat-and-mouse battle with his rivals. He charged ahead early at a pace that left him the easy victor with a time of 15min 11.60sec.

Paul Palmer, 22, and Ian Wilson, 22, watched each other instead of the clock and paid the price when they failed to meet the qualifying standard. Palmer — the Olympic silver medal-winner in the 400 metres freestyle — missed out by a frustrating 0.22sec after a race that had taken him 15min 28.79sec. Wilson's time was 15min 35.64sec.

Their efforts of yesterday

wasted, the rivals must now face a fresh test at the national championships at Crystal Palace in July, with only one place left in the 1,500m freestyle team for Seville. "I feel so stupid," said Palmer, covering his face with one of the giant paddle-like hands that have propelled him to two silver medals at senior European level and three European junior titles.

"I wasn't being cocky, just trying to scrape in and all the stuff about me just being in there to keep on after the team is rubbish — I believe I can win that race come Seville, I'm in with a shout."

Palmer, who has spent only

three weeks in the new Olympic pool at the University of Bath, his new training home away from Lincoln, said: "In my limited experience of 1,500s, I know that the day after a hard race your arms are knackered — I was holding something in reserve."

That reserve was for the 400 metre freestyle today, which will take Palmer's race schedule to 4,200 metres in three days, a regime dictated by the lunacy of cramming a six-day international programme into four days.

Karen Pickering, of Ipswich, shared the fate of Palmer and Wilson. The former 200 metres short-course world

champion over 200 metres freestyle, Pickering finished third in her specialist race yesterday, a tight final resulting in a place in Seville for Vicky Horner. Pickering, who was involved in a car crash last December, has yet to recover her best form.

Nicholas Shakkil found his however. A British exile at college in the United States, Shakkil clocked 50.04sec to break the British record for 100 metres freestyle. He swam slightly slower in the final and left Britain still in search of a sub-50sec swim. That barrier was first broken 21 years ago by Jim Montgomery.

The only race yesterday in

which two swimmers qualified for Seville was the 200 metres backstroke, in which Joanne Deakin was pressed by Helen Don-Duncan, at 15 nine years younger than Deakin. Don-Duncan finished 0.28sec behind Deakin in 2min 14.63sec, a British junior record.

Others who made the team for Spain were Margaretha Pedder, Sarah Collings and Adrian Turner. Tony Ali, of Sheffield, won the silver medal in the one-metre springboard at the European diving cup in Belluno, Italy.

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Politics.

Beer.



Bass BEST SELLING PREMIUM CASK ALE SINCE 1777

RUGBY UNION: SARACENS PREPARE TO DEFEND UNBEATEN LEAGUE RECORD AT ENFIELD STADIUM

## Wasps seek to breach the barricades

By DAVID HANDS  
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ENFIELD does not resound in rugby's annals as a fortress — not compared, say, with Kingsholm or Bath's Recreation Ground. Yet no club has beaten Saracens there in the Courage Clubs Championship this season and it is the ground where Wasps, the league leaders, saw their Pilkington Cup hopes crumble back in January.

The short trip today from one part of north London to another, therefore, has even greater significance than usual. Wasps have been alternately cast down and buoyed up by the see-saw of league fortunes this month, yet the one plain fact is that if they continue to win, the title will be theirs and they can laugh at those who do not perceive them as championship material.

They take a XV unchanged from that which started against Bath last Sunday, a tribute to the players' fitness that Saracens — still without the injured Michael Lynagh — would like to emulate. There are only nine survivors of the lost cup match and the quality of rugby that Wasps are playing is a couple of notches higher than Saracens achieved in their disappointing midweek game against Harlequins. Whether the Enfield factor — seven league wins and a draw with Sale — will lift them remains a moot point. Their fans will be lifted

by a report that they are interested in signing Iwan Evans, the Wales wing.

The "Reck" at Bath has not proved so forbidding to opponents this year yet there is no doubt that the atmosphere for the visit of Leicester will be electric. This is the club that removed Bath from the cup, this club that must win if the pursuit of Wasps is to be sustained and that returns to something approaching full strength with Niall Malone at full back, where he played so well in the victory over Wasps, and six British Lions.

Should Bath lose, of course,

TOP FIVE					
Wasps	18	14	1	3	553
Leicester	17	13	0	4	519
Bath	17	11	0	5	505
Harlequins	17	11	0	6	518
Sale	16	10	1	5	440

their European aspirations are threatened. They may be third in the table this morning but they would be within the reach of Harlequins, Sale and even Gloucester as the pursuit of a Heineken Cup place warms up — if indeed the Heineken Cup in its suggested formula happens. So great is

the unhappiness among French clubs at the proposed European season that they are prepared to offer an alternative arrangement, with commercial backing, that would exclude the Celtic sides.

If it is fortresses we are talking about, however, then Kingsholm's reputation remains safe, but in whose hands? While Gloucester players trek to Sale, their administrators addressed the membership last night, suggesting that the sale of up to 75 per cent of shares in the club would raise the necessary investment to put Gloucester

among the title contenders in the future.

The money is unlikely to be forthcoming from the club's 2,300-membership — but Gloucester hope for the same kind of approval that Sale enjoyed when, on Thursday night, their members gave unanimous support for an investment package worth a minimum £2.5 million. Sale propose a limited company that would buy the rugby-playing activities and lease amenities from the club itself, keeping rugby at the Heywood Road ground.

The Gloucester supporters, though, have a reputation for speaking their mind and *Shedhead*, their excellent fanzine, has already expressed a view: "Any buyer will soon find out that he is responsible for a hell of a lot more than some grass, a dozen or so hostility [sic] boxes, a few hundred seats and a rickety-looking old terrace — he will be the lucky owner of thousands of people, not to mention the spirits of more people than you could count which can no longer make themselves heard," the fanzine's authors, Ed Snow and Bob Fenton, wrote.

Gloucester's ideal would be to have a locally-based company as an investor, which could use the club's name in a branding exercise. In the meantime Mike Lloyd returns to the Gloucester wing against a Sale side reinforced by Charlie Vyvyan at No 8.

EQUESTRIANISM

## Mathy cuts corners to outpace Britons

FROM JENNY MACARTHUR  
IN 'S-HERTOGENBOSCH

FRANCOIS MATHY, of Belgium, riding Shirlands Governor, surprised his more experienced rivals by winning the Rabobank Prize, the opening international class at the three-day Volvo World Cup meeting here, by a margin of 1.34sec.

Mathy, whose father was a member of Belgium's bronze medal-winning team at the 1976 Montreal Olympics, has been riding with increasing confidence since winning the Brussels Grand Prix on Shirlands Governor last November. He wasted no time around the inviting 12-fence course yesterday, taking every possible short cut to finish in 46.39sec.

John Whitaker, who held the lead early on after a stylish performance on the Dutch-bred Virtual Village Heyman, finished third. He is convinced that the eight-year-old stallion, bought from Jan Tops a year ago, will soon be ready to tackle his first grand prix.

Michael Whitaker had a less rewarding time on Absalom, also Dutch-bred, who incurred 14.25 faults. Nick Skelton, on Zaba, and Geoff Billington, on It's Otto, both used the class as a "school" and incurred time faults. Robert Smith, in contrast, meant business from the start on Orthos but unluckily clipped the seventh fence.

British riders are hoping for a change of luck in the World Cup qualifier tomorrow in which Smith and Skelton, who lie nineteenth and 26th in the European League, from which the top 18 are eligible for the final, have their last chance to advance.

Holland's popular Anky van Grunsven, riding her Olympic silver medal-winner, Geston Bonfire, has built up a commanding lead in the Volvo dressage World Cup, in which she is attempting a third successive win.

Van Grunsven, who won the Dortmund qualifier last month — her only competition with Bonfire since Atlanta — won the opening grand prix by a 55-point margin from her main rival, Sven Rothenberger.

Richard Davison, Britain's only qualifier, who finished thirteenth (out of 14) after a disappointing test on Hiscoc Askari, is hoping to compensate with a good performance in the freestyle-to-music competition today, the final part of the World Cup.

IN BRIEF

## MacKenzie leads in practice

NIALL MacKENZIE made an inspired start to his defence of the British Superbike crown by leading in practice at Donington Park yesterday, ahead of the double race tomorrow. The Scottish racer, 35, has the benefit of an upgraded Yamaha for the 22-race championship that has attracted five leading factory teams, with four former champions lining up on the grid.

The former champion, John Reynolds, riding the Revue Red Bull Ducati, closed within four hundredths of a second of MacKenzie, while Terry Rymer, of Kawasaki, was marginally slower.

Seven riders, including the world champion, Michael Doohan, of Australia, broke Shah Alam course records yesterday during practice for the Malaysia Grand Prix motorcycle race.

Ice hockey: The Great Britain head coach, Peter Woods, was in optimistic mood as he and his team embarked on the final leg of their journey to Poland for pool B of the world championships, which begin today. The team's preparations included one full-scale game, a 3-3 draw against Austria in Linz last weekend.

Golf: The second day of competition at the 66th Halford Hewitt Foursomes saw the two teams many expect to contest the final tomorrow progressing into the third round with relative ease. Harrow recorded a 4-1 win over Berkhamsted at Sandwich and Radley also had little trouble in their second-round match with Canford at Deal.

Cricket: The England and Wales Cricket Board appointed Michael Browning to take on the job of event manager for the 1999 World Cup yesterday.



# Hill waiting to move out of the slipstream

His performance in Brazil, which was curtailed by an



his status to speak out. He remains unimpressed by Villeneuve's ostentatious campaign for circuits to be redesigned so that he can live closer to the edge. "I spent a season with Jacques and I learnt that his concept of what can happen in a racing car is slightly adrift of reality. I understand the sheer physics of an accident.

"You don't walk away from a 150mph shunt with just a bump on the head. I don't want to see him get hurt. I don't want to see anyone in hospital. OK, so this circuit has not got the thrill factor that people want, but it is not impossible to remove the element of danger from the sport."

"Formula One left me with a nasty taste in my mouth at an early age. I can remember my dad coming home and the look on his face because one of his friends had been killed. I grew up with that, and I won't forget it."

## Reading awaiting backlash

In the remaining match, St Albans entertain Chelmsford, the only non-league club left in the competition. Chelmsford, a much improved side, will be fighting for a place in the National League when the inter-league play-offs start at Milton Keynes on April 25.

# Springell wins with Grace

Yesterday Gary Grace added his name to the sport's roll of honour when he skipped his Handy Cross, High Wycombe, club colleague, Alan Springell, to victory in the final of the national indoor pairs championship at Melton Mowbray.

Tony Allcock suffered a first-round defeat at the hands of Brett Morley, of Nottingham, when the singles championship got under way. Morley took an early lead, but Allcock had levelled the scores at 7-7 by the ninth end. The next eight ends belonged to Morley and a brief Allcock rally was cut short when

Six of the eight quarter-finalists — Morley, Holt, Robert Newman, John Leeman, Paul Butcher and David Ward — were in the England team that won the Hilton Trophy in Ireland last month.

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# SPORT

**ATHLETICS 47**  
McColgan to be put  
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# SPORT

SATURDAY APRIL 12 1997

# MOTOR RACING 51

Hill learning  
to steer a  
quiet course



## Chelsea confidence a credit to Gullit's press-gang tactics

By OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

HIS playing days are almost over but Ruud Gullit, the Chelsea manager, showed yesterday that his ability to turn football into performance art has not deserted him. For those who thought a kind of anarchy was setting over Stamford Bridge in the run-up to the FA Cup semi-final against Wimbledon at Highbury tomorrow, the Chelsea coach had all the answers. Never has "crisis, what crisis?" been paraphrased so elegantly and so bewitchingly. Some had gone to Gullit's press conference in west London at lunchtime yesterday to hear him try to explain away the outburst this week from Gianluca Vialli, his Italian striker, about how Gullit had "humiliated" him, and to delve deeper into the rumours of a dressing-room screaming match between groups of players in the wake of Chelsea's third successive defeat, at Coventry City on Wednesday.

For the first time since he arrived in England to be hailed as the kind of renaissance football player the domestic game had been searching for, to be acclaimed not just as a great talent but a

said, Chelsea were now raring to go. The matter with Vialli was settled, too. They had had a ten-minute chat after the Italian's comments and all their problems had been resolved. Vialli loved it at Chelsea, he added, and was keen to see out his contract. Things, in fact, could not be better.

"I think the arguing between the players was a very good sign, actually," Gullit said. "I have grown used to that sort of thing in Holland. Sometimes you try to get a confrontation, you try to get something out of the players. When Vialli came on as substitute against Coventry on Wednesday, he was different, he gave us a lot of spirit and I was really pleased with him."

"It happened with Dennis Wise, too, at the beginning when I took over. It is incredible how well he is playing this year. Some players will not respond to the confrontation, others will not. I have never seen Dennis playing so consistently and off the pitch, too, he is a different person."

"This mentality of responding to confrontation happened to me, too, when I was in Italy. Sometimes, there were writers who said 'Gullit is not what he used to be', so when I went on the pitch I made sure I performed so nobody would say that was true. Then, after a while, they were saying 'Gullit has knees of glass, he cannot play for more than two or three games at a time', so I went to Sampdoria and played week in, week out, and nothing happened."

"Perhaps this method has something to do with the Dutch mentality. When Holland were playing, there was always something happening in the Dutch camp. We searched for the confrontation to get players reacting and the good players got angry, their pride was hurt and they wanted to show everything they had. This is what has happened here, now. I did it all the time in the national team and Cruyff did it in his day too."

"I wanted Vialli to be hurt by what happened. He is OK now. We had a talk with each other and he said exactly what I wanted to hear. Of course, if he is not playing he is not going to be happy, but at least he knows exactly what I want. I have already seen things in him since our discussion that have pleased me as a coach. Sometimes you get compliments from the press and sometimes you get spanked but it is all part of the business."

Gullit, though, has held back from taking the credit for the transformation that he is confident his team will show tomorrow afternoon. Much of the magic of the FA Cup has usually dissolved by this stage of the competition but the Dutchman said that he was



Gullit thanks Chelsea's critics in the media for inspiring his team during his bewitching performance yesterday

astonished at the change the imminence of the match had wrought in his players.

"I saw a different team in training today," he said. "The change in them was incredible. In the last couple of weeks we were not tuned in enough because we were so focused on this game."

"The kind of attitude they

had this morning has not been there for a long time. That is what I want for every game but maybe I demand too much. When I came here, because I wasn't born in England, I couldn't understand the obsession with the FA Cup, but gradually I am beginning to understand."

Chelsea go into the match

against a Wimbledon team whose Premiership form has also dipped dramatically, with injury worries over Mark Hughes, who has a groin strain, Andy Myers and Eddie Newton. Newton, in particular, has his own ideas about who the public would like to see in the final.

"Chesterfield have done

very well to get to the other semi-final against Middlesbrough," he said, "but I think the neutrals would rather there was a higher standard at Wembley. Chelsea against Middlesbrough or Wimbledon-Middlesbrough would be better. But I have to admit, I wouldn't say no to Chelsea-Chesterfield."

## Unlucky 13th puts paid to Faldo's dream

FROM JOHN HOPKINS  
GOLF CORRESPONDENT, IN AUGUSTA

NICK FALDO'S grip on the Masters title that he won so thrillingly last year ended on the 13th hole of his second round yesterday.

Faldo, who began eight strokes behind John Huston, had a shocking start and squandered four strokes in his first three holes. On the 13th, however, which he had played so beautifully in the fourth round last year — when he hit a two-iron that he described as one of the best strokes of his life — he ran up a nine, four over par.

This meant that he was 13 over par for 31 holes, and was certain to fail to advance to the last two rounds for the first time since he first played at Augusta in 1979.

In missing the cut, Faldo was joined by the man he had beaten so memorably last year, Greg Norman, who could do no better than a 74 for a 36-hole total of seven over par. Norman's woes were best demonstrated on the 15th, where he hit a ball into the water for the second successive day, and the 16th, where he again three-putted.

At the 1st, Faldo hit his second shot over the green and chipped back to ten feet. He took three putts to hole out. Further strokes were wasted on the 2nd, 3rd and 7th. It must have felt as if he was reliving the nightmare of the first round, when he three-putted five of his first nine holes before wrestling his play back under some kind of control to finish with a 75, three over par.

Putting was dominating the minds of all the players on the second day of the 81st Masters. After the difficulties of the first round, when a wind made the positioning of the flags so contentious, there had been a softening of attitude by club officials. The flags were more sympathetically positioned, the wind had dropped and the greens had been lightly watered to slow them down and make them a little less firm.

Consequently, the scoring was much lower. The outward nine, which the field had played in an average of nearly 39 strokes on Thursday, was merely difficult yesterday. Among those who broke par over its 3,465 yards were Tom Kite, Scott McCarron and John Morse, who were all out in 35. Warren Bladon, the Amateur champion, was out in 36.

Bladon has been one of the surprises so far. If it had not been for squandering three strokes on the 17th and 18th on Thursday, his 36-hole total of seven over par would have been much better. As it was, a 72 in his second round equalled the best score here by a British amateur and kept him in with a faint chance of becoming the first amateur from Britain to reach the last

two rounds since Peter McEvoy in the late Seventies. Bladon wore sunglasses for both rounds and was rarely without a smile. He was doing what everyone had told him to do, namely to enjoy himself and make the most of what would almost certainly be a unique experience.

"I was worried that I would make a fool of myself with a couple of bad scores," he said. "I have played two relaxing rounds, with Arnold Palmer and Ray Floyd. I played with Steve Jones [the US Open champion] and Jack Nicklaus in practice. It is nice here," he added, with a touch of British understatement.

Ian Woosnam, who had struck the ball so accurately on Thursday that he reached 16 greens in regulation figures, continued to hit the ball accurately. "I played really, really well," he said after a 68 that took him to one over par for 36 holes. "The course was easier today, much fairer."

There was little respite for Severiano Ballesteros. A 74 concealed some remarkably bad strokes and, at 11 over par, he missed the cut for the first



Ballesteros: missed cut

time since 1984. "I had four bad holes yesterday and today nothing happened," Ballesteros said. "It is what has been happening to me all year."

He, though, was 21 strokes better than Arnold Palmer, who must now be considering his future at this event. He is not perceived in the same affectionate way as are his contemporaries, such as Gay Brewer and Billy Casper, who are both 65. To players and spectators alike, Palmer is not a 67-year-old man who once won the Masters. To them he remains the Tiger Woods of 40 years ago, the man who popularised golf.

Palmer was applauded every step of his second round and, as a mark of respect, his score was not put up on the scoreboard by the side of the 18th green. Just as well. At that moment he was 31 over par for 35 holes and he dropped another shot. No one among the crowds that come year after year wants to see him struggle. He looked desperately tired at the end of both his rounds and every footstep seemed to be an effort.

## MASTERS LEADERBOARD

United States unless stated  
EARLY SECOND-ROUND SCORES: 148: L. Mike 79, 69 151: W. Bladon (GB) 79, 72 153: M. McNulty (Zm) 81, 72 154: R. Floyd 79, 75 155: S. Ballesteros (Sp) 81, 74 156: M. Bradley 79, 77 158: T. Bore 79, 79: \* T. Hogarth 80, 78 159: R. Allenby (Aus) 82, 77 160: C. Coody 83, 77: S. Jones 82, 78: B. Casper 83, 77 161: K. Green 87, 74 162: L. Roberts 85, 77 163: G. Brewer 84, 79: \* J. Miller 82, 81 176: A. Palmer 80, 87 178: D. Ford 85, 84

FULL FIRST-ROUND SCORES: 67: J. Huston, 68: P. Slankovic, 69: P. Azinger, 70: T. Woods, 71: C. Recca (It), J. M. Olazabal (Sp), N. Price (Zm), 72: L. Janzen, S. Appleby (Aus), C. Montgomerie (GB), D. Berganio, D. Love III, F. Couple, T. Joles, P.-J. Johansson (Swe), S. Langer (Ger), W. Wood, 73: C. Rose, J. Parnell (Swe), A. Lyle (GB), K. Perry, T. Lehman, E.

Elis (SA), F. Funk, 74: D. Foreman, J. Sluman, D. Waldorf, D. Hart, D. Frost (SA), J. Funk, M. Calzaghe, M. Ozaki (Japan), 75: S. Cirk, S. Torrance (GB), S. Zoller, C. Pan, V. Singh (Phi), B. Crenshaw, T. Watson, N. Faldo (GB), M. O'Meara 76: J. Leonard, F. Nobilo (NZ), S. Elkington (Aus), P. Mickelson, G. Player (SA), 77: J. Cook, I. Westwood (GB), T. Aaron, S. McCarron, D. Ogryn, M. Brooks, J. Maggert, J. Morse, C. Stadler, T. Kite, S. Foxon, Y. Kameko (Japan), G. Norrman (Aus), J. Nicklaus, S. Stricker, I. Woosnam (GB), 78: D. A. Weir, E. Fort, S. Scott, R. Tway, D. Duval, 79: S. Hoch, M. Bradley, Floyd, Bladon, Bore, 80: Hogarth, McNulty, Ballesteros 82: \* J. Miller, Jones, Allenby, 83: Coody, Casper, 84: Brewer 85: Ford, Roberts, 87: Green, 89: Palmer

\* denotes amateur

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Obituaries, page 25

## Scotland's cricketers reach new heights

By MARCUS WILLIAMS

SCOTTISH cricket is celebrating the most momentous event in its history after the national team qualified for the World Cup at the first attempt by defeating Ireland on a faster scoring rate in the rain-interrupted ICC Trophy third-place match in Malaysia yesterday.

However, before we are carried away with images of tartan armies marching on Lord's in the summer of 1999, it has to be pointed out that opponents for Scotland's happy, but largely weekend, band of cricketers in the group stage will include Australia, West Indies and Pakistan — and they are unlikely to bat with the abandon

that caused the Ireland coach, Mike Hendrick, to call his men's performance "disgraceful".

While the team, captained by George Salmond, a teacher at George Watson's College, celebrated in Kuala Lumpur, there was also a warm glow around the Scottish Cricket Union's headquarters in Edinburgh.

"We have been inundated with calls and faxes from people congratulating us," Alex Ritchie, the general manager, said. "It will be absolutely marvelous for Scottish cricket." The players' many hours in a Strathclyde heat chamber to prepare for the humidity were clearly well spent.

Election campaigners may be debating political independence for Scot-

land, but cricketing autonomy was achieved in 1994 in the restructuring of the game in the British Isles. This, together with qualification for the World Cup, will bring a welcome injection of finance from the International Cricket Council's development fund and renewed interest from sponsors. The players had to pay their own way to Malaysia.

Cricket has been played in Scotland for more than 250 years, but, although a Lanarkshire man, Mike Denness, led England in the Seventies, on the scale of Scottish sporting interest cricket figures below football and golf.

They did beat the Australians by 45 runs in 1882 and, more recently, have recorded two narrow victories over

English counties in the Benson and Hedges Cup (Lancashire by three runs in 1986 and Northamptonshire by two runs in 1990), and Freuchie, from Fife, won the national village championship in 1985.

The ICC Trophy final will be contested by Kenya and Bangladesh today. Both are assured of qualifying for the World Cup, but national pride is at stake. After one death and hundreds of injuries in Bangladesh during celebrations of their semi-final victory, police have tightened security. Princes Street, however, was reported quiet last night.

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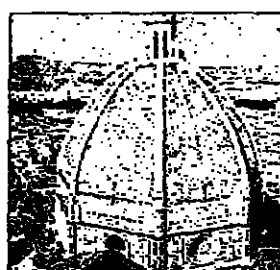




Beware of the Tatton turnips, Mr Bell  
Paul Heiney - 11

# THE TIMES weekend

From frantic Florence to laid-back Naples  
travel - 19-21



SATURDAY APRIL 12 1997

**Peter Barnard on why teaching philosophy to children could change all our lives for good**

Whether you believe something is possible or impossible doesn't mean that it is. People used to believe it was impossible to go into Space

DANIEL, Nine-year-old schoolboy, Glasgow, 1997



I distrust the incommunicable; it is a source of all violence

JEAN-PAUL SARTRE, 42-year-old existential philosopher, Paris, 1947

"Children are encouraged to articulate ideas they didn't know they had, and weren't credited with having," says Clare Cassidy, who teaches philosophical inquiry (PI). "They sit there looking like miniatures of Rodin's *The Thinker*"

## Little people, big ideas

Every parent has a misty-eyed tale of the day Alice or Thomas stopped pulling the wings from a butterfly or kicking holes in the greenhouse and said something, well, profound. You won't believe what he/she said today! But you will believe it because there is no downward age limit on insight. With education among the top four issues at the coming election, with teachers angered by league tables that seem to treat their schools like football teams, and with some of our children portrayed as the sullen, resentful inhabitants of a scholastic wasteland, surely anyone suggesting that we should teach philosophy in primary schools must be one textbook short of the full set. Yet this is exactly what is being mooted, though I say "exactly" at the risk of inciting a philosophical argument. The exact suggestion is that Thomas and Alice ought to be learning philosophical inquiry, or PI. And the most enthusiastic advocates of this radical move believe that the teaching of PI could change the nation, empower future generations, turn back the tide of federalist

non-accountability. But before we get into that, we must explain the presence above of Daniel, in the company of Sartre. The point about the quote from Daniel is that it comes not from some precocious clever-clogs, but from an ordinary Glasgow boy out of an ordinary Glasgow home, a lad from a disadvantaged background. And the point about the quote from Sartre is this: at the heart of PI is the belief that by teaching children to react to situations using thoughts and words, they will be much less likely to react using that stereotypical Glasgow debating point, a punch up the throat. Catherine McCall, director of the Centre for Philosophical Inquiry at Glasgow University, is the leading exponent of PI in Britain. She will speak at an international conference on philosophy in schools at King's College, London, on Monday and Tuesday, but this gathering will not be a love-in for proponents of PI, because there are plenty of dissenters. This dissent need not, however, detain us much. Nobody in the argument is opposed to children expressing profound

feelings and beliefs. Dr McCall's opponents are mostly sceptical about whether what she is encouraging is really philosophical inquiry or whether it is merely the ability to reason. This difference may be the core of the internal debate, but for most of us the apple itself is a lot more interesting. Dr McCall is a philosopher in her mid-40s who encountered philosophy for children when she worked at a university in New Jersey. While there, in 1984, she ran graduate courses in philosophy for teachers. Most of those applying happened to be teaching first grade (five-year-olds). She was fascinated to discover that even with children, of that age you could get results. Dr McCall told me: "It works on the basis of a proposition being put and the children reacting with statements which begin 'I agree because' or 'I disagree because'. It worked brilliantly right from the start." Dr McCall returned to Scotland in 1990 and applied her American experience there. She ran, and still runs, philosophy courses for teachers, and at present there are about 35 post-grad teachers in 20 schools

around Scotland: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Renfrewshire, the Borders, Inverness. Parts of the philosophy establishment regard Dr McCall as a maverick, but she is at pains to underline a degree of conformity: "I am not teaching children philosophy. I am getting them to philosophise. It's oral, spoken, not written and read. Philosophy is full of jargon, but this isn't. We are drawing things out of children, not putting things into them." Dr McCall insists that these discussions have to be led by people trained in philosophy, so getting PI on to the national curriculum would be extremely difficult because of the number of teachers who would need to do graduate courses in philosophy. PI seems to be easier to accommodate in Scotland than in England and Wales because the Scottish education system is more flexible, but Dr McCall believes it could eventually work anywhere in the UK. provided there was one qualified teacher to cover about four or five schools, and assuming some time could be found in the

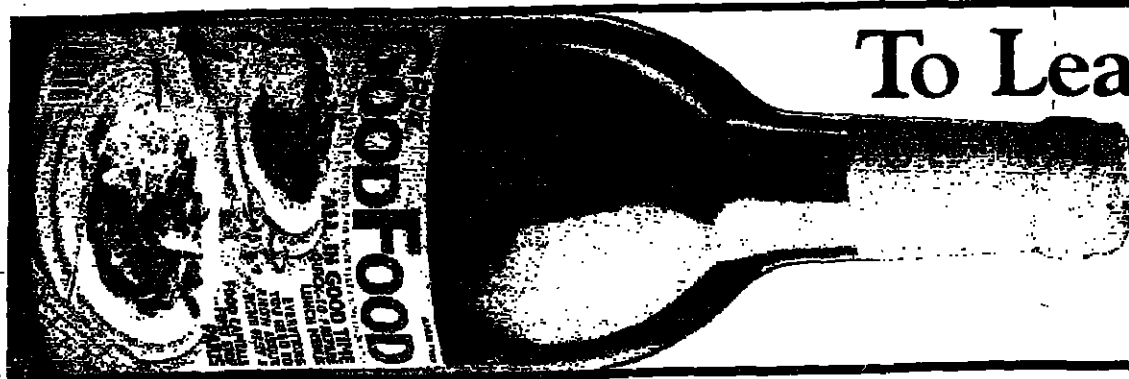
school day. There are about a dozen schools in England, and a similar number in Wales, that have used PI. One of the more remarkable aspects of Dr McCall's work is that much of her focus is on "ordinary" children. Her PI programme is not a middle-class exercise aimed at bright children in the best schools. She has encouraged PI among disadvantaged children from poor backgrounds. How does a PI session work? This is best explained by putting the quote from Daniel in context. Recently Dr McCall was leading (acting as the facilitator) for a group of primary school children. She starts by reading an extract from a book, usually, though not always, one of the books she has written for the purpose. "In this particular case," Dr McCall says, "the subject of magic had arisen. A girl named Gemma asked: 'How can a person try to make you believe that something is both possible and impossible at the same time?' That was when Daniel said: 'Whether you believe something is possible or impossible doesn't mean it is. People used to believe it was impos-

ble to go into Space.' "Quite honestly," Dr McCall says, "if you got that from philosophy students at university you would be really pleased." Clearly these children do not know Russell from Sartre. Descartes from Wittgenstein. It is likely that most of them never will, for PI does not presume to be a practice match for the big game called Philosophy. So what is PI doing for these children? "They become better listeners," Dr McCall says. "They are more creative and skilled in hypothetical thinking, they explore and understand the logical consequences of hypothesis. These changes have effects far beyond the confines of the discussion, because these skills help them in arts and sciences. The use of structure and their understanding of logic helps in mathematics, for example." All of which sounds very useful in terms of producing children who are better educated. But if we have learnt one thing in the history of mankind, it is that better education does not automatically produce a better, more civilised adult population. Does PI offer some hope? "I

think it does," Dr McCall says. "I have seen cases, among teenagers, where PI has had a marked effect: there have been amazing gains. We have seen diminished aggression, because these young people have learnt to reason with each other instead of becoming violent. In order to react they have to listen. Potentially, I can see enormous benefits to society, though some of the effects are completely unpredictable. If more people are thinking for themselves, and thinking deeply, they would be able to make changes, and we would have a more civic society. PI empowers people and it enables them to see through the rhetoric and the promises they get from officialdom. Of course, such a development would remove power from the centre. If people are thinking creatively, who knows what they might come up with?" Indeed. Given that the people who run our lives are not famous for encouraging us to think, a flood of funding for PI seems unlikely. Dr McCall went to Brussels on Easter

Continued on page 2

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## To Learn About Wine, Read The Label.

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5:50 PM

# Knit pickings

Cast aside those chunky sweaters this spring and lighten up your wardrobe with a range of fine-gauge knitwear, says Heath Brown



**M**ention knitwear and it conjures up images of chunky sweaters and cosy cardigans. But fine-gauge knits are less bulky and light enough to wear in the summer. They are easy to team with this season's silks, sheers and chiffons and are also extremely versatile. The colours should be muted and pastel. Lilac, baby blue, burnt orange and powder pink are among the favourites as well as creamy white, which matches the antique lace effects around at the moment. Long and short-sleeved tops can be paired with soft skirts or trousers. Knitted dresses are good for those brisk spring breezes and thinner, long-line cardigans are easy to throw on at dusk. The look can be classic with variations

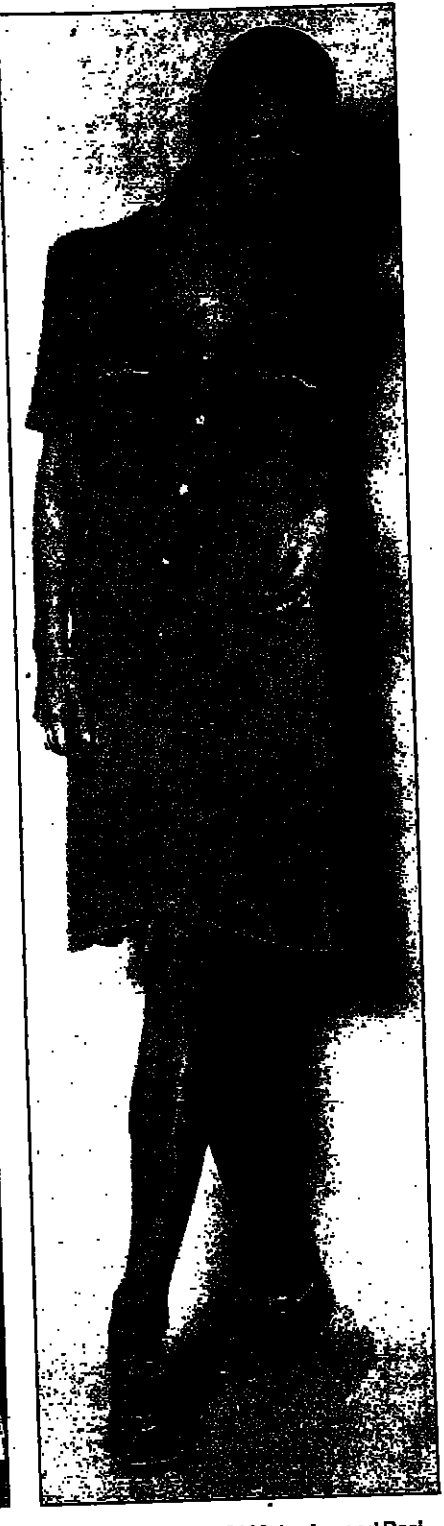
on the twinset, or more modern in crop-tops or singlets. T-shirt shapes in fine knit look smart and are more acceptable than the cotton variety for the office and for more formal occasions. A finer gauge knit can usually smarten up a simple outfit. Crew-neck tops with either long or short sleeves are perfect for wearing with a skirt or trouser suit. It is not just tops and dresses that work well in fine knits. Skirts and trousers are given a softer, more glamorous feel that is both comfortable and stylish. The lightness of fine knits makes them ideal for a layered look without appearing cumbersome. Cardigans look good worn over vests or scoop-neck tops, or when teamed with silks and thin synthetics to give an elegant, summery style.



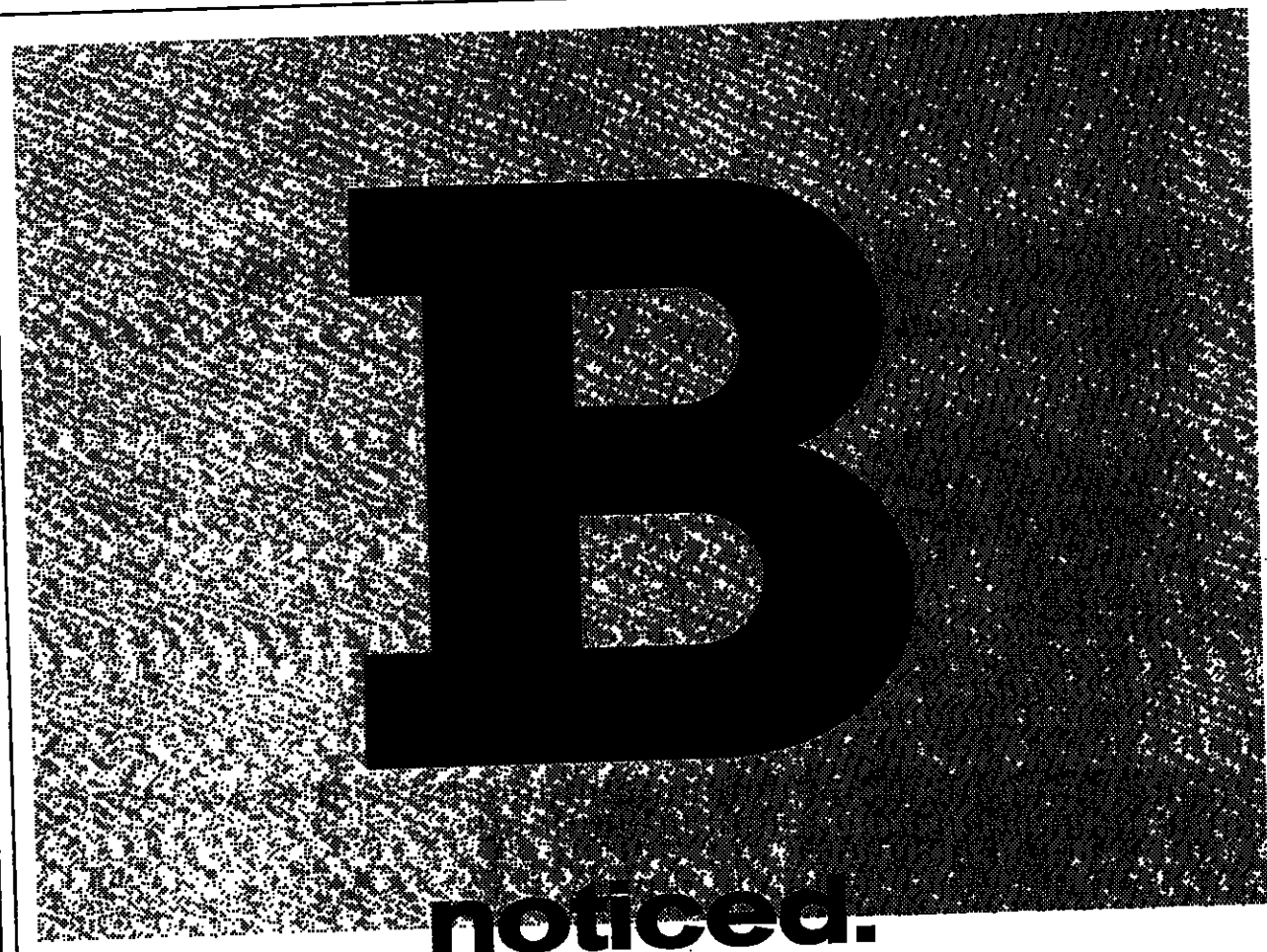
Lilac round-neck sleeveless fine knit top, £25, Warehouse, branches nationwide (0171-278 3491). Gold damask trousers, £65, selected branches of Dorothy Perkins (0171-291 2604)



Pale blue fine knit sweater, £104, by Joleynian, from Pellicano, 63 South Molton Street, W1 (0171-629 2205). Cream zigzag knit skirt, £45, Kookai, branches nationwide (0171-937 4411)



Orange knit dress, £182, by Ammand Basil, 12 Floral Street, WC2 (0174-278 4843). Suede mules, £65, Red or Dead, 1 St Anne Street, SW1; 18 Eldon Court, Devonshire Street, Sheffield (0114-273 7827)



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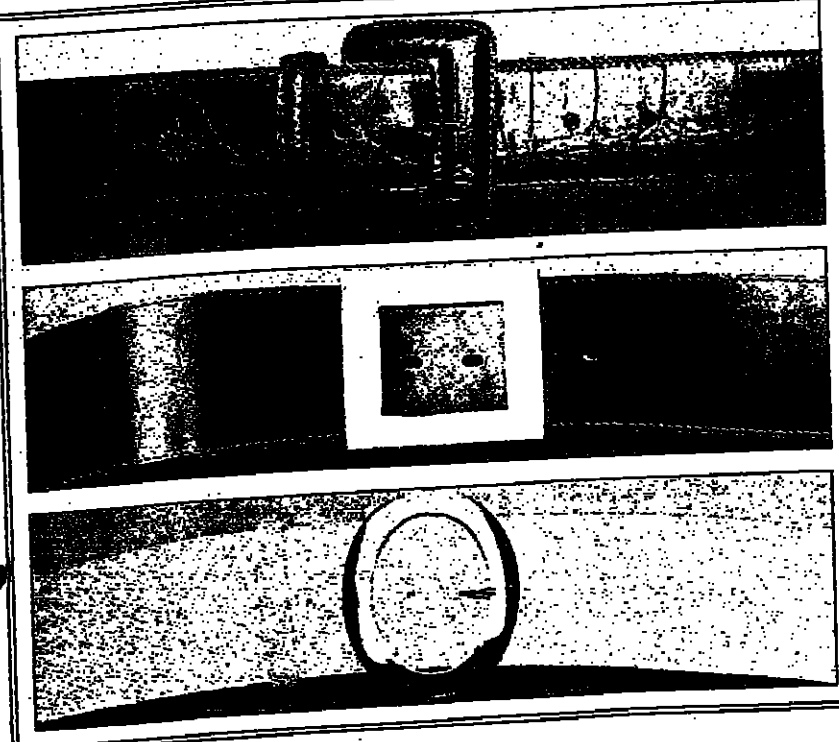
THIS season sees belts and buckles going wider and bolder. Forget thin, delicate straps and the fine chain designs — bigger is better. H.B.

Red leather mock snake belt, £75, Mulberry, 41-42 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 3900)

Wide leather belt with square buckle, £49.95, Harrods leather room, Knightsbridge, SW1 (0171-730 1234)

Cream-coloured fine mock croc oval buckle belt, £61, Otto Glanz, Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1 (0181-365 1711)

Photographs by Richard Burns. Styling by Amandip Uppal. Hair and make-up by Sarah Gottschack using Glauca Rossi Products (mail order, 0171-289 7485)









**Male and female spirex mate enthusiastically, which explains the surprisingly large number of varieties, says Barbara Abbs**

There are willows for every type of landscape, from the natural to the artificial. Native willows blend perfectly into the coppices along-

baskets, lobster pots and corals while branches and the trunk

In winter, against the dark twigs of the alders that edge the field, the orangy branches of *S. alba* and the silvery catkins on *S. daphnoides* stand out. The branches of *S. alba* cvs can be red, yellow, copper and brown, those of *S. purpurea* cvs are chestnut purple; the violet willow, *S. daphnoides*, has branches covered with a bloom like spray from a can of silver paint.

In summer when the alders are in full, dark green leaf, the golden and silver willows form an exquisite contrast. The silver willow and

**There are willows for every type of landscape: they are fast-growing and beautiful all year, and can be any height from 100ft to a few inches**

the gold-leaved willow *S. alba* var. *sericea*, and *S. alba* 'Aurea', are as eye-catching as flowering trees. Other attention seekers are *S. 'Erythroflexuosa'*, *S. 'babylonica* var. *pekinensis* 'Tortuosa' [syn. *marisudana* ('Tortuosa') and *S. 'udensis* 'Selkai']. The first two are similar and have branches and leaves that twist like country lanes. *S. 'Erythroflexuosa'* is more spectacular, with warm golden bark and saffron-yellow branchlets. *S. 'Selkai'* has broad, fasciated stems which look like coiled mahoeven moulding.

long catkins and leaves which turn from rich green to bright yellow in autumn. Large weeping willows, such as *Salix alba* 'Tristis' or *S. x sepulcralis* *chrysocoma* are magnificent all year.

Although Christopher Newsome, the doyen of willow growers, with 245 species and 2130 cultivars, and author of *Willows: The Genus Salix*, the most comprehensive guide to these trees (Batsford, £29.99), suggests some for drier areas – *S. caprea* and the weeping *S. x sepulcralis* *chryso-*

coma are among them — willows generally prefer deep, damp soils. They are adaptable, however, and simply remain on the small side if conditions are not ideal. For extremely poor soils the native sallows *S. caprea* and *S. cinerea* or their hybrids are recommended, but, mostly, willows do not demand a highly fertile soil.

Many willows are easily propagated: just stick a pruning in the ground and it will probably root, and in three years it will form a respectable shrub.

■ **TO SEE:** Westonbirt Arboretum, Tetbury, Glos (01666 880220); Wolseley Garden, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford (01889 574883).

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and lighten dull areas of your garden. We report on the opening of Barnsdale, Geoff Hamilton's famous garden. We have a step-by-step guide to planting climbers. And there's a free pocket book on shrub roses (one of a new range of BBC Pocket Plant books and videos) worth £1.99.

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# Something nasty under the pile

While rotting compost heaps are good news for the garden, Jane Owen finds that they can bring unwanted visitors

Susan Matthews' approach to spotting a rat riffling through her compost heap was robust. She started an in-depth project with her four children on Dick Whittington. And she called the rat catcher to her north Kensington compost heap.

Unless they reach epidemic proportion, rats in the country are normally tolerated whereas, in the city, when rats emerge into the open they have to be deterred. The rat catcher came within a day of Ms Matthews' call, put down the anti-coagulant warfarin, and is visiting every two days to take away any bodies and re-poison the area when needed.

"I started the compost heap when we moved to this house last autumn, and I use kitchen waste and a little cereal. In February I wanted to turn the heap so I lifted the bottomless container, forked it over and accidentally left a small gap at the bottom where the rat must have got in. It burrowed a deep tunnel," says Ms Matthews, a lecturer who is married to the artist Matthew Meadows.

Three well-fed cats, regular habits of Ms Matthews' garden, did not deter the rats, who continued to burrow in the heap even after a container was put in place, its sides pressed firmly into the ground.

Rodent determination is all too familiar to Bob Bush, chief rat catcher for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, who has been doing the job for 24 years.

"The warmth will have attracted it along with the regular supply of food. Fat and grease attract rats, who are around all the time anyway, but emerge into the open when drains are broken or if their usual food sources become scarce. If rats aren't dealt with right away they will soon build up into an infestation," says Mr Bush, whose largest recorded catch was 204 in long, nose to tail.

"By law you have to inform the local authority if there is a rat infestation. Compost heaps can attract rats because of the smell of



Rats, attracted to the smell of rotting vegetables in the compost bin, posed a health risk for Susan Matthews and her children

rotting vegetables. Mostly they live in sewers on human excreta."

And that is why Mr Bush and his team, and all the other rat-catching teams, can use warfarin to break into premises that they suspect to be infested: the threat of disease, from *Rattus Norvegicus*, is very real. If, like Ms Matthews, you have children, it is all the more worrying.

However, we should all want compost heaps both to fortify the soil and to ease the pressure on state waste disposal systems. In Canada, the rat/compost heap problem is being faced with the production of wire mesh-encased compost bins although, if a rat is determined enough, it will gnaw through wire.

But one of the compost queens of this country, Pauline Pears of the



Henry Doubleday Research Association, at Ryton Gardens in the Midlands, is more sanguine about rats' relationships with compost heaps. "At Ryton, we get rats on the compost heaps in the far fields where they are rarely disturbed, either by visitors or turning the heaps. Turning a compost heap regularly can help to keep rats away and it helps the heap to compost more quickly too," she says.

For small urban gardeners she recommends one of the compost tumblers now widely available, which are lidded plastic barrels mounted on a frame. Worm composts are also a good bet. Once a worm compost of 90-100 litre capacity is working at full strength (this can take a few months of gentle feeding instead of chucking

vast quantities of compost onto the poor animals, who will simply be overwhelmed), it should cope with kitchen waste from a family of four.

Ms Pears uses one given to her as a wedding present — it is wooden and well insulated, which gets round two of the problems posed by plastic worm composters. The first is that plastic bins tend to retain too much liquid, because the plastic sweats. This means that they need to be drained regularly or the worms may drown. Ms Pears' bin, on the other hand, allows the compost to retain its natural moisture, without a build-up of liquid.

The second problem with plastic bins is insulation. In extremely cold

conditions the worms in plastic bins will hardly work.

Plastic containers probably have the advantage of being slightly more rat-proof than wood, though a really determined rat will simply gnaw through the plastic. However Clive Roberts, the director of the company that sells the Original Wormery, says that, after 100,000 worm bin sales, there has never been a rat attack of any kind reported.

Red-hot compost heaps will also deter rats. That means getting compost composting fast. Apart from the usual commercial compost accelerators, urine gets things moving.

● Original Wormery, with a 94-litre capacity bin costs £49.90, including delivery anywhere on the mainland (01894 841515).

## GARDEN ANSWERS



STEPHEN ANDERTON  
replies to readers' letters

Q Can you tell me if *Fremontia* and *Fremontodendron* are the same plant? I would like to get hold of the variety 'Californian Glory'. — J. Bentley, Seaton, Devon.

A The accepted name for *Fremontia californica* is now *Fremontodendron californicum*. It is suitable as an evergreen wall-shrub in Britain, and lives for ten to 20 years. The flowers are a bright yellow, and are produced through the second half of the summer. The variety 'Californian Glory' is a hybrid with the smaller, more orange-yellow and less hardy species, *Fremontodendron mexicanum*, but the hybrid is harder than both parents.

*Fremontodendrons* need planting small, in spring, because they resent root disturbance, and need a light soil. 'Californian Glory' is available by mail order from Burncoose and South Down Nurseries, Redruth, Cornwall TR16 6BJ (01209 861112).

Q Last autumn, parts of my lawn failed to recover after the summer drought. The cause was an infestation of chaffer grubs, which were present over the lawn, even in areas still green. I must now relay the lawn. How can I eradicate them completely? — J. Ford, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

A Garden chaffer grubs are the white, C-shaped larvae of beetles, which hatch in summer, then in late summer/early autumn and spring eat the roots of turf grasses and other plants. In spring they are ready to pupate and then emerge as adult beetles. So laying a lawn in

spring is not a problem, as the grubs should be pupating or flown. Soil preparation for laying a lawn may, however, provide the birds with a banquet. Chaffer grubs are difficult to control with chemicals and, once you see the damage, it is usually too late.

HCH and pirimphos-methyl will kill the very young grubs when newly hatched, but would you want to treat a whole lawn? Better to spot treat if you see further activity again next summer.

Q What red and green-leaved plants are best suited to topiary? I wish to make two lines of "red can" and "green cone" shaped navigational buoys across the vegetable patch. — P. Hughes, Airmyn, Yorkshire.

A Red and evergreen is an impossible combination in this climate. But you could manage red and deciduous using the small *Berberis thunbergii* 'Atropurpurea Nana' (2ft x 2ft) or 'Helmond Pillar' (4ft x 1ft). You might manage something in a simple shape with the bushy purple plum, *Prunus cistena*, too (4ft x 4ft). Perhaps if evergreen foliage is vital you could plant some *Cordylone* 'Tor-bay Red'. You would get excellent contrast with clipped box or yew in between. Why not plant only the greens permanently, and bed out red coleus cones every summer, if you want a touch of the exotic?

● Readers should write to: Garden Answers, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. Advice is offered without legal responsibility. The Times regrets that any enclosures cannot be returned.

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# School rooms with real class

Once it was home to poor children, now it's called The Village and is a London pad for the wealthy

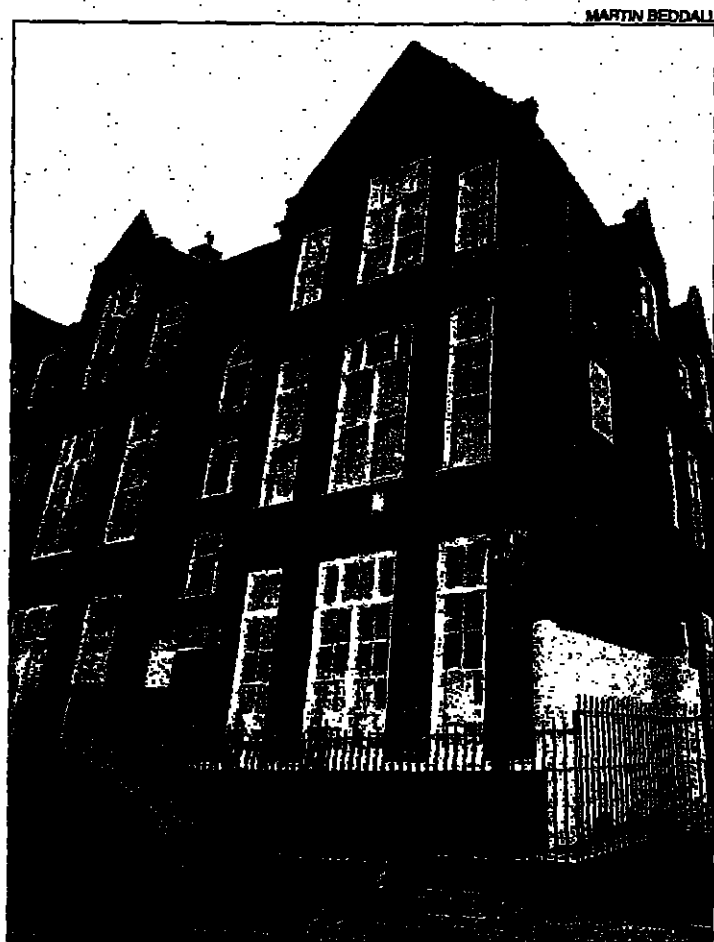
The whiff of chalk and the reek of carbolic soap have long since dispersed and its inhabitants are no longer schoolgirls in gymslips and pigtails. The Village, a converted school building in Battersea, south London, is now home to a group of glossy metropolitans, including a brace of minor royalty.

This former London Board School, built to provide space and light for Victorian children suffering from cramped and dingy conditions at home and at the child labour factories, now provides the same for, among others, Viscount Linley and his wife Serena, Michael Caine's daughter Natasha, and the Earl and Countess of Cadogan.

The list of residents has much to do with the selection process originally imposed by the owner of the development, Ashley Nicholson, and is reminiscent of the New York condominium vetting procedures of which the more rumbustious celebrities keep falling foul.

As Grant Slater describes the building work that went into his home, Apartment 16a — this is definitely not a "flat" — it is plain to see why he impressed the magisterial developer with his enthusiasm. Not content with a tiny entrance hall, Mr Slater remodelled it, which involved digging down an extra 3ft. The result, which has a pristine white limestone floor you would be sorry to drop a bottle of red wine on, means that you walk down a short staircase on entering and immediately up a short staircase into the drawing room. "We wanted the feeling of making an entrance into this room," he says, "and the stairs allow that."

Not that the drawing room needs any help. At about 31ft by 21ft, with a soaring 14ft 6in ceiling and polished wooden floor, it has the feel of a church, an impression reinforced by a gallery at one end



A corner of The Village apartments, once a London Board School

like an organ loft. This is not the property for you if you suffer from a fear of open spaces. Three full-length windows are framed by elaborately draped cream curtains. The man in charge of furnishing fabrics at the Peter Jones department store in Sloane Square asked Mr Slater how big his house was, and found it difficult to believe it was a mere apartment.

The scale of the drawing room has required monumental pieces of furniture. A 6ft bay tree decorates a corner where others might place a niggardly yucca plant; the caryatids supporting the reproduction chimney piece are the size of small children; the stereo is ensconced in a towering Indian cabinet; convoluted dried flower arrangements made of moss and bare branches resembling exotic sea corals stand 10ft high where bowls of pot-pourri

might languish. The Slatters admit that decorating such a large space is difficult, unless you like the spartan, uncluttered look. Never the less, they have managed to furnish it without making nonsense of the dimensions.

One trick they have employed is breaking up the expanse of wall space with a series of framed prints hung vertically in rows, although it would take the whole of *The Rake's Progress* to make any impression on this kind of expanse.

The other rooms have more intimate proportions. The kitchen has forgiving under-cabinet lighting that lends early morning pallor a rosy glow. The cooler has a handy barbecue gizmo, which is useful because there is no garden.



Above: Grant Slater, the owner, by the full-length windows in the drawing room

## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Apartment 16a, Hudson House, The Village, Battersea, London SW11. ● Price £795,000. ● Amenities: The whole caboodle — controlled access, closed-circuit television and secure parking. ● Neighbours: Young, wealthy professionals, including minor royalty, with a taste for expensive cars; they respect each other's privacy so no curtain twitching. ● Shopping: Sloane Square, Harvey Nichols and Harrods food hall are between ten and 20 minutes' drive away, depending on the weight of traffic over the Thames. ● Disadvantages: Keeping up with the Joneses.



Above left: the high-ceilinged drawing room has the feel of a church, an impression reinforced by a gallery at one end like an organ loft. Left: the ground-floor kitchen and breakfast room

has a useful baby-sitting advantage in that his parents can keep an eye on him from the drawing room.

The master bedroom and adjoining bathroom are well-decorated and uncluttered. There is plenty of storage space, including a wall of cupboards, for bundling unsightly objects out of the way.

The third bedroom is on the ground floor, and also has an en suite bathroom. The room doubles as a study for Mr Slater, who works from home as an investor, but, he says, could be used as a smaller, cosier dining room. At

present the Slatters use part of the drawing room for eating.

The couple bought the apartment before they had a baby and are planning to live in the country with their son. This is, however, a property that might have been developed with a child in mind. The insulation (the walls are 1½ feet thick) and the space (2,300 sq ft) render it noise-proof and play-friendly — it is not often one sees a large toy train track assembled on the floor without furniture pushed aside to accommodate it.

Original photographs of the school show Victorian children happily playing with hoops and toys, so I left the apartment with this small nod to the spirit of the building in mind.

KATHERINE BERGEN

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Hall, drawing room, kitchen/dining room, study, 6 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms. Store room. Self contained annexe. Parking. Single storey barn. Workshop. Attractive walled garden.

Region £425,000

Apply: Cirencester 01285 659771 (CPD/133573)



### Hampshire

Hambledon, Petersfield 9 miles. Portsmouth 12 miles. A3 (M) 5 miles. London (Waterloo) 65 minutes. (Distances and times approximate)

A charming house in the Hambledon Valley Hall, 4 reception rooms, master bedroom suite, 8 further bedrooms, 2 further bathrooms. Tradition barn. Further outbuildings. Attractive gardens with swimming pool.

In all about 2½ acres (1.01 hectares)

Apply: London 0171 629 8171 (RS/125067)



### Buckinghamshire

Ibstone, Henley-on-Thames 10 miles. High Wycombe 12 miles. M40 (J5) 2½ miles. (Distances approximate)

An extremely well presented barn conversion in the heart of this popular village with attractive views to the east.

Vaulted reception hall, 4 reception rooms, main bedroom and bathroom, 3 further bedrooms, 2nd bathroom. Detached double garage with stable/workshops to rear.

Courtyard and formal garden.

In all about 1½ acres (0.55 hectares) Region £495,000

Apply: Beaconsfield (01494) 675368 (NCR/133287)



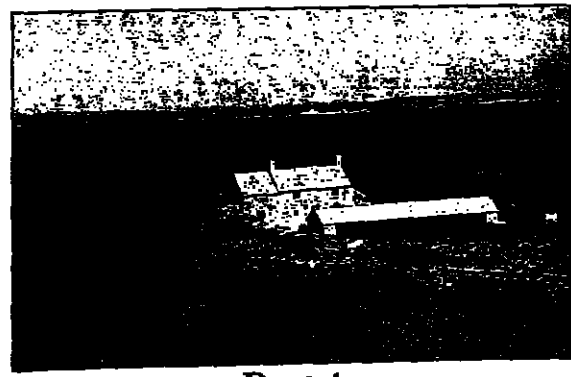
### Oxfordshire

Henley-on-Thames 7 miles. Reading 6 miles (Paddington 25 minutes) 45 miles. (Distances and times approximate)

An outstanding house set in beautiful secluded gardens surrounded by mature beech woodland. Reception hall, 2 reception rooms, family room, sauna room, 4 bedrooms, 2 dressing rooms, 3 bathrooms. Attractive guest wing/self-contained staff flat. Swimming pool, tennis court. Garages. Paddocks and loose boxes. Mature gardens and woodland.

In all about 20 acres (8.30 hectares)

Apply: London 0171 629 8171 (PB/NCR/119465)



### Dorset

Studland, Swanage 2 miles. Bournemouth and Poole 8 miles. (Distances approximate)

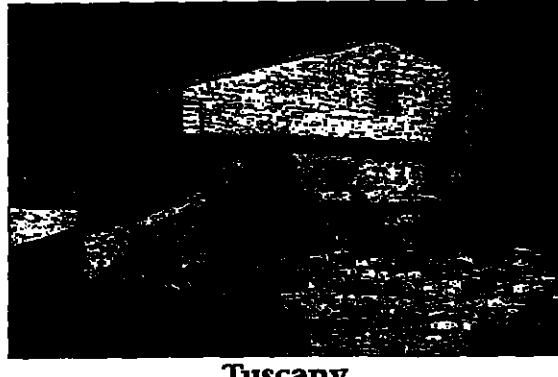
A charming renovated cottage close to Studland Bay

2 reception rooms, utility room, bedroom suite, 2 further bedrooms, further bathroom. Garage, studio and stables. Gardens and paddocks

In all about 4½ acres (1.82 hectares)

For Sale by Public Auction (unless previously sold) on Friday 18th July 1997

Joint Agents: Corben and Son, Swanage 01929 422284 Knight Frank, London 0171 629 8171 (RS/DEM/133236)



### Tuscany

Siena about 25 km. Florence about 60km.

A large farmhouse, currently divided into four apartments, on the edge of an ancient chianti hamlet

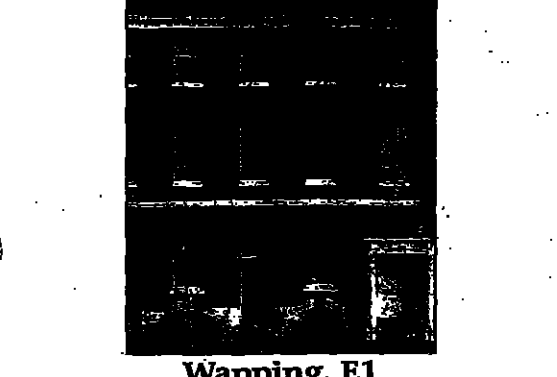
6 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms.

Garden with swimming pool and outside eating areas. Suitable for small business or re-conversion.

In all about 2 hectares (5 acres)

Region £490,000

Apply: Chianti Estates, Siena (0039) 577 731120 in association with Knight Frank, London 0171 629 8171 (PD/WT/133674)



### Wapping, E1

The Pierhead

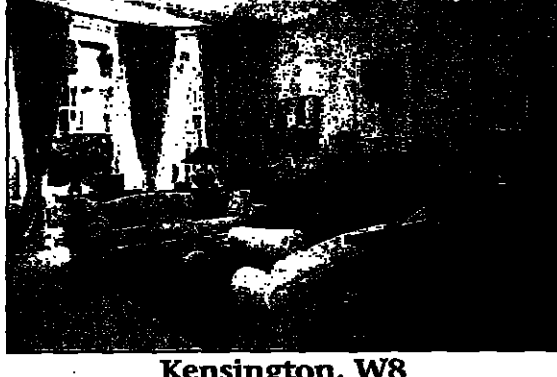
A Grade II listed Georgian townhouse in an idyllic setting by the Thames

Drawing room, dining room, study, kitchen/breakfast room, 3 bedrooms with shower en suite, bathroom, 2 cloakrooms, conservatory. Gas CH.

Parking on private road.

Freehold £645,000

Apply: Wapping 0171 480 6848 (SS/132810)



### Kensington, W8

Phillimore Place

An elegant and spacious garden maisonette in this semi-detached stucco fronted period house on the sought after Phillimore Estate

Double reception room, kitchen/breakfast room, cloakroom, laundry room, master bedroom suite with en suite bathroom, 3 further bedrooms, 2 en suite bathrooms, en suite shower room.

Garden. Video entrance phone.

Leasehold 20 years £875,000

Apply: Kensington 0171 938 4311 (ED/130133)

LONDON  
Tel: 0171 629 8171  
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London W1P 9JY











FOR SALE

WITH SWIMMING POOLS



**CORNWALL**  
City An Epice, Marazion, Georgian Grade II listed village house with views to the sea and St. Michael's Mount, in lushly landscaped gardens with a bathing pavilion and a 12.5 metre indoor heated pool surrounded by tropical plants. Seven bedrooms, three bathrooms (two ensuite), four reception rooms, playroom, fitted kitchen, flower room and laundry room. Garage, outbuildings. About £425,000 (Knight Frank, 01392 432111)

**LONDON**  
20, Upper Brook Street, Mayfair W1. Restored six storey Georgian house with a split level Italianate garden and a 36ft indoor swimming pool, with counter current jet and a gymnasium area. Five bedrooms (all with ensuite baths), four reception rooms, lift, kitchen, two staff bedrooms and bathrooms, chauffeurs flat, garage and movie parking. About £5.85m for a 101 year lease (Wetherill, 0171 493 8935 and De Groot Collins 0171 235 8090)



**MIDDLESEX**  
Recently renovated house in a third of an acre garden with an indoor swimming pool complex, including a 36ft heated pool, Jacuzzi, shower-room and sauna. Six bedrooms, five bathrooms (four ensuite), music room, four reception rooms, 30ft billiard room, luxury fitted kitchen/breakfast room and butlers pantry. Barbecue house and double garage. About £1.2m (Knight Frank, 0171 824 8171)

CHERYL TAYLOR

Forget foreign holidays – more people are staying at home and renting a little house in the country

## A cottage industry at its best

More and more people are doing it – last year was a good year and on early indications, 1997 looks set to be pretty busy. Taking a short break or summer holiday in a self-catering cottage is increasingly popular. Whereas once the idea of a "holiday home" conjured up thoughts of damp and rather spartan accommodation, there has been a move upmarket to provide a home from home, so now you get roses round the door and all mod cons.

The choice is diverse ranging from thatched cottages to castles and quaint seaside homes to country houses with swimming pools. Simon Tregoning, one of the partners in Classic Cottages, a Cornish-based company whose bookings leapt by 18 per cent last year, says: "There is a sway against being packaged abroad and people are looking at taking a holiday in their own country."

If you have an attractive village or country property – whether acquired as an investment, inherited from a great aunt, or a weekend retreat that is no longer much used – it could well prove a valuable asset as a holiday cottage.

On top of the income that can be generated from letting the property, there are a number of significant tax advantages worth exploring if you plan to turn your second home into a small holiday business.

And if you're thinking about letting the house or cottage through a specialist holiday company, now is the time to contact them as many are assessing new properties for inclusion in their 1998 brochures that will be launched this autumn.

Using a holiday letting company relieves owners of advertising the property, arranging bookings and dealing with payments. But what you cannot hand over is the responsibility for cleaning up between guests and keeping the property up to scratch.

If you want your cottage accepted by one of the glossier, more upmarket letting companies be prepared for a

thorough vetting and having to spend some money on fixtures and fittings to meet high standards. Some will present owners with a daunting list of requirements so you can forget about painting off that old swirly carpet for the sitting room or some dated crockery for the kitchen.

Nick House, managing director of the selective Rural Retreats letting group, rejects four out of five properties he looks at, while Leonard Rees, who runs Quality Cottages in Wales, says that of 360 houses he was offered last year, he took only 36.

"We used to put old things into rented houses and buy new for our own. Now we buy new for the cottage and we keep the old," says Jenny Burr, owner of Fowlers Cottage in Sussex, a picturesque beamed house that dates from the 15th century. At the peak of the holiday season it costs £465 a week to book Fowlers.

Mrs Burr has rented out Fowlers for ten years through English Country Cottages. "I knew it would let easily but I loaded the idea to start with. Now I don't like it if it is empty," she says. She would not contemplate managing the lettings herself. "I would never get the bookings and could not afford to advertise. This way we also avoid the hassle of handling deposits and payments."

With the increased popularity of short winter breaks and new year bookings, a holiday cottage can earn its keep year-round, especially if it is in one of the honeypot areas such as the Cotswolds or the West Country. Last year English Country Cottages, one of the largest companies in the market, reported a 20 per cent increase in winter season bookings.

Commission charged by letting agents varies. English Country Cottages charges commission of 25 per cent on the total rental price while Classic Cottages, with 320 properties across Devon and Cornwall, charges 23.5 per cent. Quality Cottages, which has around 150 properties along the Welsh coastline, charges 30.5 per cent. Rural Retreats charges a hefty

There is a sway against being packaged abroad



Jenny Burr at Fowlers Cottage. "I hated the idea of renting at first but now I hate it when it's empty"

33 per cent rising to 48 per cent, though this includes property management – cleaning and replenishing food hampers and toiletries that are standard in all the houses.

On top of commission charges, the letting company will also levy an annual or one-off registration fee of around £100. Other costs include public liability insurance for the property, which will mean a slightly

higher premium than usual for buildings and contents insurance.

One benefit for owners who use a letting company is that they are less likely to lose out if a booking is cancelled and will receive between 75 and 100 per cent of the income for the period concerned.

Advertising in a glossy brochure alongside a lot of other attractive houses may not appeal to all, not least

because your house, however charming, is up against stiff opposition from other properties.

Putting an ad with a photo in the post office window may offer greater exclusivity but a probable viewing public of three men and a dog. Many holiday companies advertise and market their brochures widely and groups such as English Country Cottages also sell their brochures through branches of WH Smith and Sainsbury's.

In addition, many of the holiday companies are tapping into the growing demand from customers outside the UK, marketing properties through agencies in the US and Europe. Classic Cottages and Rural Retreats estimate that 10 per cent of their bookings come from customers abroad.

If you do decide to sign up, don't start planning your retirement straight away. Many houses take a couple of years to reach their peak helped by repeat bookings and recommendations from previous satisfied customers.

CLARE STEWART

● Quality Cottages, 01348 837874, English Country Cottages (also for Wales, Scotland and Ireland), 01328 864292, Classic Cottages, 01326 565656, Rural Retreats, 01386 701177.



Fowlers Cottage in Sussex costs £465 a week to rent in peak season

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Farnham 3 miles Alton 4 miles

A classic William and Mary country house with later additions set in gardens of national repute. 7 bedrooms, 6 bathrooms, reception hall, 5 reception rooms, integral 3 bedroom flat, 5 cottages, garages, outstanding gardens with paddock, arable and pasture land. About 9.61 ha (23.5 acres).

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**SURREY – Charlwood** Available as a whole or lot 1 only

A Grade II\* manor house on the edge of the village. Lot 1: 6 bed house, adjoining 2 bed cottage, gdn, grass tennis ct, swim pool, about 1.49 ha (3.7 acres). Lot 2: barn, outbuildings, paddocks, about 6.27 ha (15.5 acres).

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**SPRIMONT PLACE, Chelsea, SW3**

In a wide sunny street between Sloane Avenue and Chelsea Green, a well-arranged house approached via pretty communal gardens.

3/4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, 2/3 reception rooms, kitchen, cloakroom, small private garden, 2 communal gardens. Underground parking available to rent.

Freehold  
£695,000

**CHELSEA:**  
0171-352 1484



**NORTH SOMERSET, Clapton in Gordano Bristol 8 miles**

An appealing house on a prestigious private road.

5/7 beds, dressing rm, 4 baths, recep hall, 3/5 recep, kitchen, large playroom, drive garage, office, outbuildings, gardens & grounds. About 2.02 ha (5 acres).

Price Guide:  
£700,00

**CIRENCESTER:**  
01285 642244

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE – Marlow** About 2.92 ha (7.2 acres)  
An impressive country house in a commanding hillside setting with extensive views to the west over the Thames. 4 beds, 2 baths, shower rm, recep hall, 2 recep, kit, b'fast rm, garden rm, studio, further kit & bath, dble garage, swimming pool, terraced gardens, woodland. OXFORD: 01865 311522 HEAD OFFICE: 0171-493 4106



**RIVER HOUSE, W6**

A charming late 17th/early 18th century house with commanding southerly views of the Thames and a 48.75m (160ft) garden.

5 bedrooms, 2 dressing rooms, 3 bathrooms, 3 reception rooms, kitchen, laundry room, cloakroom, off-street parking.

Freehold  
Price Guide: £875,000

**KENSINGTON:**  
0171-727 0705

**CLOUDESDALE ROAD, SW17**

On the Heaver Estate off Ritherdon Road, a charming house with a south west facing garden and possible loft conversion (subject to consents).

4 beds, bath, 2 recep, kitchen, utility rm, cellar, 2 lofts, garden.

Freehold  
£235,000

**WANDSWORTH:**  
0181-871 3033





Martin Bell, the 'white knight' and son of a farmer/writer, would do well to heed his father's words as the electioneering mud flies

## Beware of the Tatton turnips

If you watched Martin Bell, the television war reporter turned frightened white mouse, as the press grinded him on his election intentions in Tatton, you might wonder why he was doing it. Why should an individual as clearly possessed of a rational mind as Bell throw himself unarmed into a fight he can never win, whatever the outcome? If he gains the seat, he will be lumbered with a parliamentary career he does not want; if he loses he will never be allowed to live it down. Poor Martin; it's all a long way from the comparative peace of his father's Suffolk farm.

Forgive any attempts at amateur psychology, but for an explanation of recent events in his life — "there are some things in life that you don't enjoy doing, but sometimes like having done; I think it might turn out to be one of those" — the temptation is to examine the blood that flows through Martin Bell, a few drops of which famously remain in Bosnia.

His late father, Adrian Bell, has been an inspiration to me, and to readers of rural literature of the middle years of this century. He worked his small East

Anglian farm at a time when a flood of writers were answering an irresistible call to the land. Among them was Henry Williamson, who farmed in Norfolk, and the literary critic and philosopher John Middleton Murray, whose distinguished work, *The Conquest of Death*, may be great reading for some, but for me there are more laughs in his *Community Farm*, an account of an idealistic attempt at socialist farming. It founded, incidentally, when his idle fellow workers found that no amount of socialist thought could make light of the filthy business of harvesting roots in a wet October. Marx and mangelwurzel did not mix.

I have heard it said that this remarkable trio of farmer/writers, Bell (who also compiled crosswords for *The Times* while driving his Fordson tractor), Williamson and Middleton Murray, would generally meet at Beccles livestock market. Oh, to have been a blowfly

buzzing around the cattle ring as these three minds mulled over the philosophy of farming or, more likely, cow prices.

I have no idea whether Martin Bell enjoyed his childhood on the farm, and having once mentioned it briefly I did not get a response as from a man for whom a rural upbringing counted for much. I worried me, because I, too, have farmed and written with a family tumbling along in the boiling agricultural wake, and am now beginning to wonder exactly which sins of the father will eventually be visited on the children. Martin Bell may

### DOWN TO EARTH



PAUL HEINEY

be asking himself a similar question. If "sometimes we have to get off our backsides and help people" can be seen as the visitation of a parental sin.

Reading Adrian Bell's *The Budding Morrow*, a vivid personal account of wartime farming, despite its title, it is clear that Bell Sr. like son, was a torn man: "Even in the engrossing task of writing, if I had composed a sonnet to rank with Shakespeare's, and it was running through my head, and I saw Strawberry looking into a dry water trough, I should have to risk forgetting it to carry a pail to the cow."

It should come as no surprise that a man who would not rank his own creative powers above the brief thirst of a cow, should sire a principled son who would say that "I could think of lots of reasons for saying this is none of my business..." and then, through determination to do the right thing, stick his neck so far out as to be in grave risk of decapitation.

There may be simpler reasons. We are told by Bell Sr: "I send Martin across to take the apple that is slowly being brought forth, not from either pocket this time, but from under his hat. Martin is expectant, not knowing quite what Mr Merry is fumbling after in that old relic. 'Father,' he comes running after me. 'Mr Merry had an apple in his hat.' Martin bites into the apple. A thought strikes me: a mental picture of the inside of that hat. 'Martin,' I call, 'here a minute.' But he has already taken

three more bites. I'll not tell his mother." As a self-confessed "hopeless romantic", was it always intended that Martin Bell should take a bite of any tempting apple, even the poisoned one in Tatton? I wish him well: he is an intelligent man capable of ploughing deep furrows who will have great difficulty in the thin soils of politics. Doubtless it will be a ride as bumpy as any his father experienced on a tractor. There will be much mud slung in the next few weeks and, if it is any help to the younger Bell, it might be in the words of his father, who wrote after a muddy day's work pulling turnips: "I take no responsibility for the children beyond their bodily safety. 'Nothing will clean you,' I tell them, 'but the mangel-scraper.' Anyhow, mud is comparative. A speck or two can be a tragedy on some occasions: when you are splashed from head to foot you forget about it. It is very unpleasant at the beginning. A thorough baptism is the only thing; complete immersion, and that comes soon enough. Thereafter one flops straight through anything." Tread carefully through the turnips, Martin.



The wilderness-like Cairngorms, scene of a bitter battle between the promoters of a mountain funicular railway and environmental groups

## Fast track to conflict

In the Cairngorms, a funicular railway for skiers has been given the go-ahead, to the fury of environmentalists. Here we outline the two sides of a dispute with a much wider resonance

Plans for a funicular railway hauled by cable along a 6ft-wide zip up the front of Cairn Gorm mountain outraged some environmentalists, but now the scheme has the blessing of Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the Government agency and arbiter on Scottish environmental issues. Supporters insist this should allow the project to proceed without a costly and delaying public inquiry.

Earlier objections by SNH were withdrawn after reaching a legally binding agreement with the developer, Cairngorm Chairlift Company; the landowner, Highland and Islands Enterprise; and the planning authority, Highland Council. The Section 50 agreement should ensure that the natural heritage of Cairngorm and the

scheme is necessary and viable. They claim cross-party support, so even a change of government should not jeopardise their expectations.

Approaches are now being made to private and public sources in Britain and Europe to fund the funicular, with the aim of starting work in spring 1998. The developers say disturbance will be kept to a minimum during construction, with helicopters used to transport materials and any disturbed ground reinstated. But the rift remains with those who object to the crowds, machinery and erosion that development inevitably attracts to sensitive wilderness areas. The thousands who enjoy skiing believe that when development is concentrated in one, relatively small area it is a price worth paying.

Roger Crofts, the chief executive of Scottish Natural Heritage, said the deal was legally enforceable and met Government obligations under the EC habitats directive. The claimed "better alternative" of a Glenmore Gondola, proposed by the RSPB, the National Trust for Scotland and other objectors, was rejected as flawed by the chairlift company. It says the scheme would be more environmentally intrusive, on land notified by SNH as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. It would also affect part of

the scheme is necessary and viable. They claim cross-party support, so even a change of government should not jeopardise their expectations.

I align myself with overwhelming international scientific and conservation opinion which has answered yes to that question and urged us to treat the

unreliable employer. You don't make a fortune in the Highlands when your enterprise is dependent on the weather. Is there a better way? I think so, one which puts the landscape first, creates reliable jobs for all time, and could even save the face of SNH.

Suppose SNH is infiltrated by a more enlightened leadership than it enjoys, a passionately Scottish one as opposed to the passion-free and un-Scottish incumbents: true champions of a native landscape are the natives.

The first step freezes the funicular in its tracks. The second step is to commission one more study: the potential for employment in a nationally funded Cairngorms-wide programme of rolling conservation, a benchmark which would establish more commitment to the cause of nature conservation than we have ever dared to contemplate.

In such an endeavour is also to be found the key which will unlock the regeneration of rural communities, without unflattering and slavish addiction to tourism.

When this study demonstrates the undeniable long-term advantages for the Cairngorms landscape and its people, SNH goes back to the Government (a Scottish Parliament will have been in place for some time by now), points out past errors, and argues with the force and passion of which it will now be capable that skiing should be abandoned in the Cairngorms, that Cairn Gorm itself should be closed for 20 years while the mountain is restored and given time to heal, that the Scottish Parliament commits itself to a 100-year programme of management of the Cairngorms in which nature conservation will be the overriding concern.

A locally recruited workforce will be trained in every aspect of mountain and pinewood conservation, and have jobs for life if they want them, because continuity will be crucial to the enterprise.

So the landscape is in better heart, the communities round its fringes are in better heart and have a stake in the landscape's well-being. And people as a species have begun to look at the Cairngorms as an opportunity to put back something of what has been removed.

None of all this will happen unless we want it badly enough. That's all that stands in our way.

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## Singing troglodytes



Male wrens build as many as five of their domed nests in different parts of their territory

THIS IS a busy month for male wrens. These tiny

birds of the undergrowth are singing furiously to warn off other males from approaching their territory, and will face them defiantly with lifted, quivering wings if they come too near. Sometimes, two males will fight over a boundary, and you see them scrabbling and tumbling together down through the leaves.

In addition, the male wrens are building nests — often as many as five in different parts of their territory. They are substantial, domed nests of grass and moss, and are hidden in ivy, cracks in sheds, or in other camouflaged crevices. These nests are called 'cuckoo' nests, and are used to attract females.

If a female comes into his territory, a male wren will try to conduct her to one of the nests he has built, singing in order to lead her on. She will inspect it, and after that may remain with him as his mate. Later she may use the nest to lay her eggs.

Many male wrens remain monogamous after they have been accepted by a female, but some will end up with three or even four mates.

They are so preoccupied with all this business at

### FEATHER REPORT

present that it is easy to get close to them. They are not much more than three inches long, and when they have their tails cocked they look even shorter.

On a near view, you can see the fine barring on the rich, russet-brown feathers, the white throat, and the creamy stripe over the eye. The coat of feathers is thick and warm, and their legs are sturdy. When the birds are nervous they bob up and down, and when they sing the whole body seems to shake.

A FEMALE wren will lay as many as ten eggs in the nest, tiny white eggs with red spots. She will incubate them herself, and will not get much help from the male with feeding the young. The adults like eating beetles, but the young get smaller and softer insects. If the mother finds a beetle while foraging for the young she will swallow it herself.

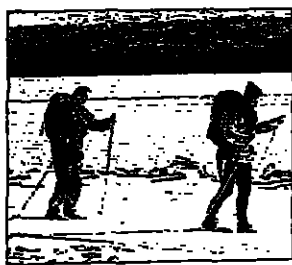
It is an amusing sight when the young leave the nest, putting their heads out and streaming off one after the other. They hide together in a thick hedge at first, and during the few weeks before they become independent the male

will sometimes feed them, especially if the female is starting to lay another clutch of eggs. However, some females find a new mate for their second brood, and then there is a game of musical chairs among the wrens in the neighbourhood.

There are many species of wren on the other side of the Atlantic, but our wren, whose scientific name is *troglodytes* or cave-dweller, is the only one found in Europe. It is very common indeed — in fact, it is probably the commonest bird in Britain, with perhaps seven million pairs nesting here. This often astonishes people, because it is a furry bird and not so often noticed. But its rapid, vibrant song, with a passage of deep, throbbing notes in the middle of each outburst, is very distinctive, and if you get up at dawn in almost any kind of habitat just now, it is likely that you will hear them singing all around.

### DERWENT MAY

What's about: Birders — listen for cuckoos with their familiar call, Twitlers — little bittern, Highbridge, Somerset; snaf, scoters, Titchwell, Norfolk; garganey everywhere. Details from Birdline, 0891 700222. Call cost 40p a minute cheap rate, 50p at all other times.



The funicular will give visitors a Highland experience



The wildlife communities will be trampled underfoot

After considering the alternatives and having lengthy negotiations with groups involved, the lift company opted for the funicular. It says this will whisk 1,200 skiers an hour up the mountain, more than double the present maximum. The trip will take four and a half minutes, against the 17 minutes taken by the present chairlift, and the railway, with its two-metre wide track, will be less vulnerable to the high winds that can sweep the face of Cairn Gorm. In summer, the funicular will be fitted with seats and cruise more slowly along its tracks to give visitors more of a "Highland experience".

The ski area occupies 1 per cent of Cairngorm's 167,500 acres and has an established network of 17 lifts and tows, used by up to 200,000 skiers in winter. About 50,000 visitors use the chairlift in summer, and the system helps underpin 2,500 tourism jobs in Speyside, where the lift company is the area's second largest employer.

Now the environmental battle has been won, in the view of the scheme's supporters, the cost and viability of building the funicular will most likely be brought into question. The estimate of £16.5 million made about three years ago seems likely to have increased towards £18 million. The promoters, supported by the Scottish Sports Council, Scottish Tourist Board, Scottish Civic Trust and local organisations, are happy with the sums and convinced

mountain where there was no skiing. More significantly, the gondola plan would not prevent passengers walking from the top station out on to the sensitive areas that need protection.

The funicular railway would rise more than 1,400ft from the present car park, via a new middle station with a new restaurant, to the Ptarmigan top station beneath the 4,084ft summit of Cairn Gorm. The final 800ft would be through a tunnel, avoiding the funicular breaching the skyline.

At the Ptarmigan, a second, 250-seat restaurant is planned, with an interpretive centre giving visitors an insight into the history and ecology of the Cairngorms and, on a fine day, superb views across Speyside.

The scheme's supporters say it is crucially important that the Ptarmigan would have no summertime exit for visitors. Only the emergency services would have easy access to the sensitive plateau area. Anyone wanting to climb Cairn Gorm would have to start at the bottom — on foot.

RONALD FAUX



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# If you go down to the woods today

A walk in the woods is a walk in the woods. But taken at the side of Christine Reid — a woodland officer from English Nature — and all the signs indicating whether a patch of wood is ancient or modern will be pointed out in the time it takes to skip to its farthest side. "It's not so hard," she says. "You look for the identifiers."

She leads me up the edge of Hayley Wood near Longstowe in Cambridgeshire on a fly-blown day and nods to the raised bank and ditch which rims the wood from the field. "Small woodbanks are fairly typical of ancient woods," she says. "They would have had pollard stumps and woven fences to keep animals from getting in and out."

Miss Reid is passionate about our ancient woods. She has drawn up free easy-to-follow pocket guidelines to help the lay woodland-walker get an historic angle on the woods they romp through or even own. "Ancient woods are the best examples of woodland for wildlife in the country. If the sometimes tiny fragments are identified they can be treated in ways appropriate to their status. I'm often called by people who have bought a wood and they say 'We don't know much about it but it's got bluebells and oak trees... it must be ancient.' That's not always the case."

Ancient woodland, by definition, has been wooded continuously since at least 1600. Modern planting began after that date, so if the wood was there by then it's likely to be old or a remnant of the wildwood which covered most of the country 7,000 years ago.

Two types of ancient woodland exist. "Semi-natural" is untouched and composed of native trees — oak, ash, maple, hazel, beech — while "replanted" ancient woodland" has been wooded continuously since 1600 but the original cover has been replaced with planted trees (often conifer).

Not much ancient woodland survives. Since the 1920s, 38 per cent was felled or replaced with conifer. England's total woodland cover is 7.5 per cent (compared with a European average of 29 per cent). About 20 per cent of that survives as pure semi-natural ancient woodland. "The biggest problem is the ancient woods are so fragmented," Miss Reid says. "There are patches

There are patches of ancient woodland all over Britain — if you know what to look for

all over the place. Most are in Kent and Sussex but there's a lot in Cumbria and the Wharfe valley in Wales. Ancient woods in Cumbria drip with moss and lichen because the climate is so wet."

English Nature sends out free country-by-county inventories which map ancient woodland down to two hectares (five acres). But it knows there are many small scraps under two hectares. Only by cross-referring early Ordnance Survey map evidence (first edition 1809 reprints available from David & Charles publishers) with the field guidelines, is one able to identify the ancient from the not-so-old.

Miss Reid takes me further along a rambling path. We know Hayley Wood Nature Reserve is ancient because it's mentioned in the Domesday Book — if you wanted to graze 60 pigs there in 1086 it would cost two shillings per annum. She points to the random spacing of the trees and the multi-stem bushes of ash and hazel trees which rise to 15ft in wildish clumps.

Coppice stools with oak standards — the tall trees cut for timber — are typical ancient features," she says. Coppicing is the old practice of cutting non-standard trees to the base every ten years. This allows sunlight to reach the woodland floor much more than in woods planted with conifers like juniper and yew which have a dense evergreen cover of needles.

"This makes the ground flora so special," she says, scooping her hand down to an oxlip. "They're a bit like a primrose and bit like a cowslip but oxlips have a drooping head. You don't find them outside ancient woods."

She lists rare plants that thrive there: wood mullet, yellow archangel, spotted orchid, bird's nest

orchid and the insectivorous lords-and-ladies flower. Yellow brimstone butterflies, commas, and white admirals do well in the glades of ancient woods which often follow the natural course and depressions of ponds and streams.

Bluebells, of course, are another ancient identifier. "You don't really get wonderful carpets of bluebell in non-ancient woods," she says. "You can't find them in Europe. Their woods are managed more than here. People come from all over the Continent to see something which is quite special."

I say the ancient wood has an untidy feel. Stunning 300 to 400-year-old oak trees are wizened and twisted. There are dead tree trunks lying on the woodland floor green with moss. "That's a bit of a loaded statement," Miss Reid says. "It's very good for wildlife. It creates lively habitats for bats and woodpeckers and dormice."

We walk to a triangle of Hayley Wood planted in 1922. The trees are more or less the same height and evenly spaced. "There's a different feel to this place. It's more regimented, more orderly," she says. Old ridges and furrows underfoot are a sign the land was ploughed as farmland not so long ago — and, therefore, a recent addition.

Ancient woods have sinuous irregular boundaries. They're often along parish boundaries or adjacent to common lands and heaths. It's rare to find them bound by straight lines and their names incorporate old words for wood — "grove", "hanger" and "lea".

English Nature would like to link nearby fragments of ancient woodland and encourages owners of replanted ancient areas to replace conifers with native broadleaf trees.

Miss Reid says: "The tiny fragments are so important because they store rare seeds and species which can be passed by birds along corridors of hedgerows to the larger ancient woodlands."

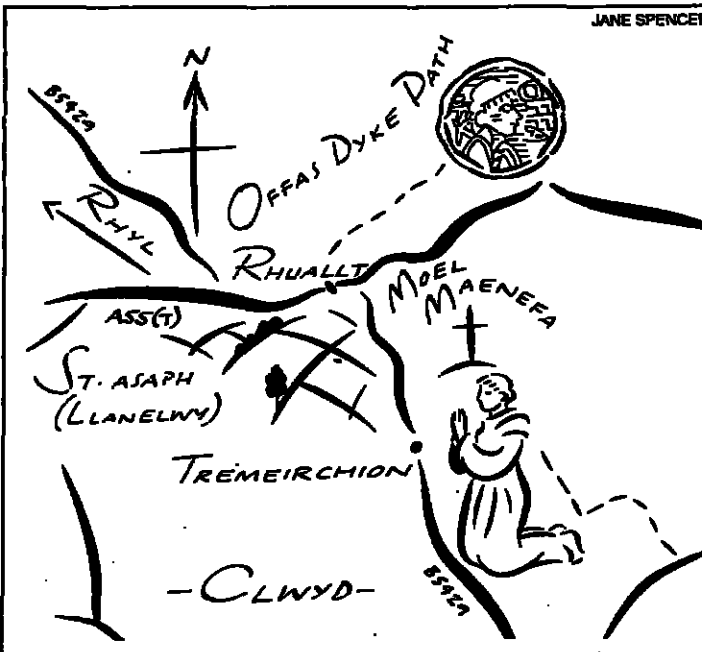
"When I walk through woods like Hayley Wood I am struck by its sense of history. The old trees give us a sense of time. I find it amazing that the wood has been used for centuries."

ALEX WHERATNE

English Nature, 01733 455101.  
David & Charles, 01626 334555.



Christine Reid of English Nature in Hayley Wood, Cambridgeshire. "I find it amazing that this wood has been used for centuries"



## ON THE SPOT: CLWYD

### Rural recommendations

The place: The iron cross on the summit of Moel Maeneff, near Tremerchion, Clwyd

The view: To the west a patchwork landscape "plotted and pieced — fold, fallow, and plough" of the Vale of Clwyd, and if the weather is clear the gleam of Snowdonia and the sea. To the east the bare hill falls away through green pastures and patches of beech wood to Cheshire.

The appeal: My parents used to live in the monastery of St Beuno's below. The Jesuit poet Gerard Manley Hopkins studied for the priesthood there. He saw his "windhover" on this hilltop. The cross on the summit has become a place of pilgrimage.

Historical interest: The hilltop is part of Offa's Dyke, the boundary reputedly established by King Offa between Wales and Mercia in the 8th century. There are remains of ancient forts and tumuli.

Best time to visit: Spring when the slopes are clad with gorse and foxgloves and the "windhovers" hang against the wind. They are watching for the rabbits whose burrows riddle the slopes.

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By JOANNE GLOVER

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Don't sneer at Rhyl and rarebit, it's now seriously hip to be Welsh. Alex O'Connell reports on a rising cultural identity

# The year of the dragon

When Neil Kinnock stood for election in 1992, being Welsh was about as cool as a camping holiday in Rhyl. In a country more associated with rarebit and Ruth Madoc than the future of British politics, he was best advised that the way to gain support was to tame his lulling accent and play down his home town connections.

But in the past five years there has been a defining of Welsh cultural identity and a resurgence of nationalist spirit. Plaid Cymru, the second strongest political party in Wales behind Labour, is expected to increase its voting power this year.

The Welsh arts scene is booming and if London is swinging then Newport and Swansea are gyrating so fast that dizzy city dwellers are having to sit down. The Union Jack has been heralded as the fashion print of the summer, but the seriously hip are wrapping themselves in the Red Dragon and wearing daffs on their lapels.

Tear yourself away from the pull of S4C's cult soap opera, *Pobol Y Cwm*, for long enough and you will notice that there are Welsh characters in *EastEnders* and BBC2's *Nineties* real-life drama, *This Life*. Both are pasty, whining and rather unlikely romantic characters, but they both break television tradition: they aren't miners and they don't sing in the

church choir. The Welsh film industry also reflects this trend. So Aberystwyth may not be the new Cannes, but Welsh Film Festival promoters are expecting more visitors than ever this year. Urban Wales is at last getting a look in.

Karl Francis's *Streetlife*, written for Screen One, and Mark Evans's *House of America* discuss Welsh inner-city existence, while the independently made film *Twin Town* (co-produced by *Trainspotting* team Andrew Macdonald and Danny Boyle and directed by Kevin Allen), is set in Nineties Port Talbot and Swansea. Hollywood has also jumped to attention — there are rumours of a film about a colliery in South Wales starring the very on-Welsh Michelle Pfeiffer and Nick Nolte.

Even established Welsh stars like Tom Jones are reaching new levels of cultural recognition. He has always strummed over the cross-generational divide, attracting diverse audiences from the Sixties teenyboppers who first wobbled to *Delilah*, to the twenty-somethings who remember his ironic cover of Prince's *Kiss*, but in Tim Burton's pre-millennial disaster movie, *Mars Attacks!*, he has reached a new generation. For the soundtrack to the alien invasion, Hollywood producers favoured Jones's quiet crooning of *It's Not Unusual* over the usual bleeping synthesizers.



Our traditional view of Wales, right, is being challenged by the film *Twin Town*, above, and Brit winners, the Manic Street Preachers, top right

There was a time when Aled Jones was the nearest the Welsh got to Top of the Pops. Although *Walking in the Air* had every choirboy in Britain shrieking into a tape recorder, wearing jeans on *Saturday Superstore* and meeting David Bowie does not a pop star make. But there is no doubt that Wales is exploding with talent. As tabloids dub Newport "the new Seattle" and the word "Britpop" is deleted from style glossaries, the unlikely catch-words, "Taff-pop" and "Daff-rock" fill the fanzines.

Welsh pop group the Manic Street Preachers, from Blackwood in Gwent, cleared up the silverware at last month's Brit

Awards. Fiercely nationalistic, they dedicated their last album *Everything Must Go* to the Tower Colliery in Cyon Valley, South Wales (bought out by miners and put back in operation). On their last tour, they projected Dylan Thomas's poem, *I See the Boys of Summer*, on to the stage backdrop while bassist Nicky Wire took to hanging the Welsh flag over his amp, later cloaking himself in it to collect the Brit Awards. The group are anxious to work on a film script on Owain Glyndwr, the Welsh William Wallace, procurer of self-rule in Wales. *Everything Must Go* has shifted 350,000 copies and the band are on a lap-of-honour tour. Even Kylie

Minogue has recorded a single with them for her new album. The lesser-known Pembrokehire band, Gorky's Zygotic Myth, play traditional instruments (including a crumhorn and a shawm, a medieval reed instrument) and many of their songs are written in Welsh.

Their latest album, *Barfundle*, is named after a beach in South Wales. At their Cardiff gig on St David's Day, the audience pinned daffodils to their T-shirts and, although most only spoke English, they sang along to the Welsh anthems with gusto. Graham

Noone, bassist in the Newport band FIJCD, who runs the Tuesday night local band slot at Newport venue TJ's, says most of the bands that have passed through his doors, including the Manics, Gorky's, 60FT Dolls, Dubwar and Super Furry Animals, consistently return to Newport. "They love Wales," he says. "OK, so it's a depressing place, but that's why people are so enthused and getting on with things."

He denies the rumours, for the record, that Newport is the new Seattle. "It's Newport, actually. A lot of the music here is rock-based, too, but there is really no comparison."

He says Cardiff is too much

like London, and prefers Swansea and Newport. "When you play in Cardiff people tend to sit down and clap a bit, here in Newport they go mad. Most of the audience are members of other bands, they all record at each other's studios and go to each other's clubs. We all know each other."

This familiarity extends to the theatre world. The actor Michael Sheen and Swansea-born writer-director Simon Harris went to the same Swansea theatre school and they formed the Welsh theatre company, Thin Language, together. Harris's play *Badfinger*, directed by Sheen as part of the Four Corners

season at the Donmar Warehouse and about to be taken on a Welsh tour, was partly financed by a string of pals that reads like a valley boys' Who's Who: the Manics, the Kinnocks, playwright Julian Mitchell, actor Anthony Hopkins, footballer Mark Hughes and the normally Welsh football player Vinnie Jones.

Like his pop peers, Sheen's heart is still west of London and he has hopes of creating a theatre there. "I am based here now, I have to be," he says, "but I go back home to Port Talbot whenever I can."

The highest number of self-employed in the country are residents of Plaid's four Mid-Wales seats. Although some of these are more likely to subscribe to *Farmers Weekly* than *The Stage* or *NME*, there are also extraordinary numbers of self-motivated artists and craftspeople.

Do these figures suggest Plaid Cymru might benefit by activating this talent to form a Welsh Red Wedge cum Rock the Vote? So far we have actor Phillip Maddock campaigning on the streets, but that's about it," says a man in the Plaid Cymru office.

The guitarist of the Welsh pop group Categori lives with Hywel Wigley, son of Plaid president Dafydd, but the party thinks the chances of the band singing from the back of an election trailer are slim: "I'm sure they are much too busy partying in Swansea."

## A VET WRITES

The teacher at my daughter's school keeps a cockatiel in a cage in the classroom and I am concerned it may be a risk to my daughter's health because she is asthmatic. Should I raise the matter?

**Answer:** — which used to be called psittacosis — can be transmitted to man and cause a type of pneumonia. But if the cockatiel is healthy there is little chance that he is infected. If your daughter has not had any problems associated with this classroom it suggests bird dust is not a factor in her attacks.

JAMES ALCOCK

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# That animal magnetism

Some pets can form unlikely alliances with other creatures

If a man's best friend is a dog, then it should not come as too much of a surprise to find that a goose can forge a relationship with a goat, and a horse with a cat. And it certainly comes as no surprise to Dr Roger Mugford who runs Ruxbury Farm, an Animal Behaviour Centre to which vets can refer their problem patients whose conduct needs improving.

"Most animals are social and they look around for others of their species to bond with," Dr Mugford says. "But when an animal is denied contact with its own species, it will seek friendship elsewhere and, as a result, form some very unusual relationships." These cross-species associations are the basis of our relationships with domestic pets — especially where there is only one animal in the household.

"If we want to have animals as pets and feel they love us, the penalty we have to pay is their dependence on us," he says. The relationship, according to Dr Mugford, is one of social commensalism where pet and owner obtain benefits from the other without either being harmed. "In the case of Chippy, a goat, and Nobby, a goose, I think the goat gets more out of the relationship because he is my only goat. Nobby does have two other geese for friends. But the goat does protect the geese from dogs." Bonding between different

species can have many benefits including the avoidance of traditional animosities if the animals are introduced at an early age. A puppy brought up in a house with cats will pal up with the felines rather than declare war on them. Basil is a fox who likes nothing better than to curl up on the sofa with his friends — the other cats and dogs who live at the Capricorn Animal Rescue Centre in North Wales. Rescued as a day-old cub after he was abandoned by his family ten months ago, he was bottle-fed by staff and treated like a puppy — even being taken for walks on a lead. A diet of tinned dog food completed Basil's domestication.

Staff at the rescue centre doubt that Basil will ever be returned to the wild as he does not have the skills to survive — he is even frightened of chickens and other fowl. A rescued gander picked up the young cub by his tail and carried him around the centre. "That left a lasting impression on him and he's afraid of anything with feathers," says Sheila Stewart, manageress of the rescue centre.

Such displays of animal magnetism are also evident in horse-racing. Nearly every trainer has a tale to tell of a horse who grew dependent on another animal for friendship (including sheep, goats, donkeys and even a pigeon). In many cases this resulted in the companion animal enjoying a day at the races.

Remittance Man, a highly strung gelding and winner of the Queen Mother Chase at Cheltenham in 1992, cannot bear to be parted from his stable-mate Nobby, the third and longest-serving sheep to have kept the horse company. Nobby travelled everywhere with the horse during his racing career and they are now enjoying retirement together in Oxfordshire. Horses form strange relationships because of loneliness. To avoid the costly accidents that can happen when horses play together, racehorses must be kept apart. Many spend much of their day in a single-cell stable.

The animal watcher Desmond Morris compares this incarceration to prisoners being kept in solitary confinement. "It can make humans go mad eventually," he says. "Horses are gregarious animals but they are also very amenable. Most will put up with being alone. But when we say racehorses are highly strung, what we mean is that they can't cope with isolation."



Chippy the goat protects his geese friends Samson and Delilah from dogs

Gomez, a cat at Ruxbury Farm, has formed a bond there with a horse called Jupiter. Dr Mugford says: "They play together and the cat lets the horse chase him around the field, but Jupiter is careful not to hurt Gomez."

But he warns that such relationships do not always work. "You are more likely to have trouble between different species than with animals of the same kind. This can be apparent where one animal is a carnivore, such as a dog, and another is what might be considered its traditional

prey, such as a chicken or sheep." A study — or some knowledge at least — of a species' natural history is recommended for the pet lover who wishes to have a variety of animals in the home. The domestic behaviour of pets is often at odds with their natural instincts which can surface at any time.

BRENDAN MARTIN

Dr Roger Mugford, Animal Behaviour Centre, PO Box 23, Cherzery, Surrey KT16 0PL (01832 506666).

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the world normally divides more simply into "them" and "us" — adults vs. children. The problem of having a parent teaching alongside you is that loyalties are divided.

Tony Muir says: "My father died three years ago and never asked him why he took that job. We never talked about what either of us went through. It was probably just as bad for him but we never spoke of it. I wish we had been able to."







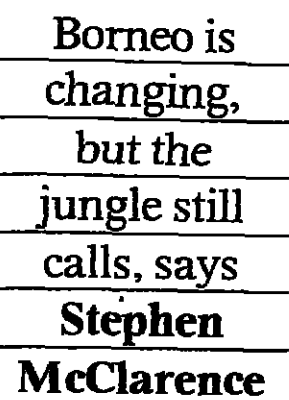


# THE TIMES

# travel

**Canada - 22**

# In the footsteps of headhunters



We set up camp near a mud volcano: a clearing in the forest where animals gather to bathe. Patrick stares at a pile of dung. "Elephants were here yesterday," he says.

A village woman of the jungle, her ear lobes pierced, stretched and hung with weighty jewellery, is the traditional face of old Borneo. Elsewhere, high-rise hotels and shopping malls reflect the Malaysian boomtime

- **Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions (0171-381 8638)** organises little-made tours of Borneo, from £1745 for a two-week Sabah Wildlife Safari, including four days' jungle trekking in Tabin, three days on Uluaram Island and return flights from London.
- **A double room at the Riverside Majestic Hotel in Kuching (00 60 82 247777) costs about £94 a night, including taxes.**
- **Vaccinations are not compulsory for Sarawak and Sabah, but protection against typhoid, cholera, hepatitis A, polio, tetanus and malaria are recommended. See your GP.**
- **British passport holders do not need visas for Sarawak and Sabah.**
- **The best time to visit is March-July. Temperatures hover around 30C all year. The rainy season is November-February.**
- **Reading: the Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5264) recommends:**  
*Writings in the Great Forest of Borneo*, by Gando Bessari (Oxford, Unibody Press, £11.95), *In the Heart of Borneo*, by Redmond O'Hanlon (Penguin, £6.99), *Malaysia & Singapore Handbook*, by Joshua Eliot (Footprint, £12.99), *Insight Guide, Sabah* (Insight, £3.99).

Most of the tourists have

Later, ready-hatched baby turtles are released into the water. "Go for it Leonardo," shouts an excited American, splashing about among them.

"Do you hear that clicking?" Bingo, our new guide asks. "It's clams closing."



At the far end of the gallery is a reconstructed native long-

● The author was a guest of Worldwide Journeys and Expeditions.



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## AROUND THE WORLD: A WEEKEND GUIDE

## Burnt out by the sun

## TRAVEL NEWS

■ **DESPITE** increasing awareness of the dangers of sunburn, one in six Britons still overdoses on sunshine on holiday, a new survey says.

Nearly half of those who suffered used creams that were too weak. A higher number said they did not realise how strong the sun was. About 28 per cent got burnt after falling asleep in the sun. Burns were so bad that one in ten sufferers had to go to a doctor or hospital, says the insurance company Home & Overseas.

The older generation are the most sensible, with two-thirds of over-55s saying they never got sunburnt, compared with one-third aged below 35.

■ **MORE GERMANS** travel to more countries than any other nation. Their wanderlust means that almost 80 million — one in eight — of the world's tourists come from Germany. The Czechs are the second most travelled people with 57.3 million on the move last year. Americans are in third place and Britons fourth, according to a survey by analyst Euromonitor.

France is the most popular country and attracts 60.5 million foreign visitors a year, with Spain second, America third, Italy fourth, China fifth and Britain sixth.

The biggest growth in both arrivals and departures has been in eastern Europe, with Poland recording a 70 per cent increase since 1991.

■ **RESTAURANTS** in some of the most popular resorts in Cyprus, such as Ayia Napa and Protaras, will shut next week because of a strike by staff in protest at a Government ban on issuing work permits to foreigners.

■ **SINGAPORE** just pipped Manchester to be voted the world's top airport by long-haul airline passengers, says the International Air Transport Association. The new terminal at Changi ousted Manchester from the top spot it held last year in a poll of 55,000 passengers.

■ **A NEW** agency letting cottages has opened in Northern Ireland, with more than 100 properties on its books. Country Cottages (01232 815838) offers converted coach houses, farmhouses, fishing lodges and stone cottages, all of which are tourist-board graded. Peak season prices rise to £400 a week.

Frazer Hood, of Country Cottages, says: "Until now, there has not been an independent agent acting for self-catering owners in Northern Ireland."

On request, he will identify the type of cottage required and send individual details of relevant properties.

■ **SOUTH** African Airways has dropped its orange livery with a Springbok on the tailfin of its 2,000 aircraft in favour of the country's new flag.

■ **P&O** European Ferries has reduced peak-season fares on the prime Dover-Calais route by 22 per cent to bring it in line with its Channel Tunnel rival Le Shuttle.

The new fares are £210 for peak weekend travel and £150-£169 for weekday sailings. Single and five-day tickets start at £90. All prices are applicable to a car and up to eight passengers.

## Night life with Elvis

**FORGET THE** likes of the Hard Rock Café and Planet Hollywood; a nightclub bearing the Elvis name is to open in Memphis this summer as part of the biggest ever Elvis Week (August 9-17), commemorating the 20th anniversary of the king of rock'n'roll's death. Expected to be the first of a worldwide chain, the large club complex is situated in the former Lansky's department store where the young Elvis bought his drainpipes and loafers in the 1950s.

Other highlights of the wake will include a candlelit vigil on August 15, the night of his death, talk-ins between family, friends and fans, and the opening of his parents' bedroom at his Graceland mansion. A favourite Elvis snack — fried peanut butter and banana sandwiches — will be on sale throughout at the café next to his recording studio.

## Postcards from the edge

**THE 24-hour** delivery of a postcard from Perth, Australia to a pensioner in Devon may be a record; personal experience reveals that Europe has a more cavalier attitude towards holiday mail.

Having recorded the dates of a year's cards sent and received, Hong Kong's service comes out top with an average of two to three days for delivery, and even my messages from Zanzibar took only six days; with you were here from Salzburg took four days, Dordogne five days, Greece a week, and even within Britain three to four days was par for the course.

The worst culprits: out of five postcards sent from Otranto in Italy, three were never seen again and the other two took three weeks to arrive. Two pre-stamped cards handed in to a Nairobi hotel did not arrive at all, although a card posted in Madrid at Christmas did — on February 20.

## Bastille biking

**CYCLING** for Softies (0161-248 8282) suggests La Venise Verte as the ideal spot to join France's Bastille Day festivities. In many of its villages you get a double dose of revolutionary celebrations, with fireworks, live music and dancing under the stars starting on July 13, followed by picnics and parades on July 14.

The Venise Verte in the Marais Poitevin is one of the lesser known regions of France. It is criss-crossed by little lanes and a web of 12th-

century canals hidden under tunnels of beech and poplar, and is a flat but picturesque landscape that is ideal for cycling novices.

The firm's seven-night "Super Softie" break, based on the village of Celles sur Belle, costs £563 for half-board accommodation, cycle hire and route maps, but not travel to and from France.

■ **TRADITIONAL** winter sunshine destinations are being offered at reduced prices in what is their low season from April until the end of June. In Kooni's (01306 740500) Limited Edition programme, a week's B&B in Luzon costs between £259 and £319; six nights in Cuba's Havana costs £299-£345 or in a Varadero beach resort from £355-£379, both on a room-only basis. There are also savings on holidays to Mexico (from £499), the Maldives (from £529) and Grand Cayman (from £579).

## Late bookings

**WITH** tour operators already putting "full up" signs at many popular summer destinations, I checked out a few last resorts from the largest tour operator, Thomson Holidays (0990 502555).

Claiming a 20 per cent rise in bookings overall for summer 1997 — fastest sellers being the Balearic Islands, Canaries, southern Spain and, after a few years' gap, Italy — it can still offer space on the sand in the Greek islands: a June week on Kos, the birthplace of Hippocrates, costs £300 B&B. In Spain's Almeria, an August half-board week costs around £380. In Croatia, a week's half-board costs £400-£440 in either picturesque Rovinj or the old Austro-Hungarian aristocratic holiday favourite of Opatija.



You too can place flowers on Elvis Presley's grave at Graceland during Elvis Week in August, which marks the 20th anniversary of his death

Further afield, the Dominican Republic is a longhaul bestseller that is already 70 per cent full, and you may have better luck with Mexico, Jamaica or by flying to Florida from a regional British airport. A fortnight's package to Orlando in early July, departing from Cardiff, costs £565 (based on four sharing on a room-only basis).

■ **THE International Otter Survival Fund** (01471 822487) is running five-day otter watching trips to the Hebridean islands of Skye and Raasay between May and October. On the west coast of Scotland otters are not nocturnal, and with patience and luck it is possible to watch them fishing and playing in the lochs. The price of £325 includes full board and daily excursions with a professional guide.

## Historic homes

**WELL-KNOWN** for its British collection of forts and follies, the Landmark Trust, the charity that

rescues historic buildings and lets them out for holiday rent, also has foreign properties.

In Italy, these include 26 Piazza di Spagna, the apartment sleeping four in Keats's former house in Rome — he died on the floor below in 1821 — which costs £1,134 a week (per property); and Villa Saraceno, the 16th-century Palladian villa in Vicenza that exemplifies all the characteristics that English architects learnt from the master himself, Andrea Palladio. The villa costs from £3,283 a week and can accommodate 16 people.

Naulakha, Rudyard Kipling's former New England home in Vermont, was built in 1893 when he was still entranced by the countryside of his new wife's family, although homesickness drove him back to Britain. Eight people can rent the home for £890-£1,328 a week.

The Landmark Handbook costs £8.50, refundable against booking from the Trust (01628 825925).

## JILL CRAWSHAW'S TRAVEL TIPS

■ **No trip to Scotland** is complete without a visit to a distillery and some serious sampling. Details of the 42 distilleries that welcome visitors, including those with facilities for disabled people, are available from the Scotch Whisky Association (0171-629 4384). An interesting phrase recurs in 22 of the 42 listings: "Admission charges with redemption in shop". What can they mean?

## Sea stories

**THEMED** cruises will take place on Cunard's (01703 634166) QEII this summer. Television chef Gary Rhodes and wine expert Charles Metcalf will be the guest lecturers on the transatlantic voyage between Southampton and New York from June 6-12, on a "Chefs de Chefs" cruise from August 24-30, the personal chefs of some of the world's leaders (including the

Queen, President Clinton and President Chirac) will tempt passengers with their recipes.

During a July cruise around some of Scandinavia's fjords, Yorkshire artist Ashley Jackson will be the guest lecturer, while darts takes centre stage on a transatlantic crossing from August 24 to September 4, with Eric Bristow and Keith Deller. The 14-night Scandinavian cruise starts at £1,595, the six-night transatlantic crossings from £1,265.

## Driving range

**THE 14** remaining Grand Prix events, as well as the Le Mans 24-hour race, the Indy 500 and the Goodwood Festival of Speed, are all in Page & Moy's (0116-250 7007) Motor Racing Tours programme. For those who want hands-on experience, a Commando Day break at Mallory Park on June 7 and December 6 includes driving an Alvis Stalwart amphibious vehicle, an Abbot tank and Honda Pilot, Dune Buggies. The cost is £165.

Poorly trained and over-equipped novices on diving holidays are destroying rare marine life

## We're killing off our coral seas

**T**he ever-growing popularity of recreational diving is good for business — but not for the coral reefs and their inhabitants. With bigger, more fuel-efficient aircraft, cheaper tickets and dive centres booming everywhere, divers travel ever more frequently, in larger numbers, further and further away to the last unspoilt places in the world.

As if that is not enough, there are new big boats almost everywhere to take divers to the most remote and inaccessible virgin reefs. A few are ecologically aware; most, unfortunately, are not.

They arrive in the mid-Pacific or the central Red Sea with perhaps fewer than 15 dives logged and the printer's ink still wet on their certification cards, armed with video systems and cameras that make Jacques Cousteau's equipment look like toys. With no knowledge of marine life or buoyancy control, they damage and destroy the reefs and bit by bit, day by day, they eventually frighten the marine life away.

In Egypt, on the Sinai peninsula, the booming diving trade has got so busy that dive sites have to be policed and prior booking has to be made with the local authorities to go to a selected dive site. And if one wishes to see sharks — it's too late. They have all swum away to quieter areas. I visited Sudan last year and was deeply saddened by the amount of damage being done to some frequently dived reefs there.

Sha'ab Rumi and Sanganeb reefs are among the richest in the Red Sea and, according to popular belief, they are little known and rarely dived. This is far from the truth. At the time of my visit there were possibly up to ten live-board boats operating out of Port Sudan — not bad for a country that is still in a state of civil war.

Most of the divers seemed to be Italian and many were apparently experiencing their first tropical dives. Corals were being hung on to and dislodged in the strong currents, fragile staghorn and fire corals were being broken into

pieces by careless fin kicks or being landed on as a result of poor buoyancy control.

A diver was seen to sit on a large brain coral to pose for the camera. Photographers regularly sit, lie or kneel on corals while taking photographs. In one case I observed a pair of divers remove large chunks of the reef to get a closer view of a moray eel hiding in a crevice, only to find the eel swim off in a panic.

Much worse: at the Cousteau Precontaminant II study area, on Sha'ab Rumi reef, many of the corals are dead. Some of the extremely large table corals that look so beautiful in Andre Ghisolfi/Alessandro Cardini's book, *Red Sea Diver's Guide*, stand now as great, lifeless skeletons.

**Y**es, there still is a lot of coral there but it is soft coral, *Lithothamnion arborescens*. This is an aggressive grower that takes particularly well in areas where there is no competition, notably on dead corals.

In the Mediterranean there is also a problem, again with

recreational divers. Although there are no coral reefs, there are many "ahermatypic" corals. These are solitary, non-reef building corals that grow mostly in shaded areas such as cave entrances or on rocky overhangs.

All along the rocky Mediterranean coastlines there are uncountable crevices, caverns, rocky overhangs and permanently shaded walls, areas that sustain a prolific growth of delicate bryozoans (sea mosses), ahermatypic corals, fan worms, anemones and sponges.

The Mediterranean, with its warm waters and relatively short flight times from most of Europe, attracts divers by the thousands each summer. Indeed, many may learn to dive here. But, once again, lack of knowledge and poor buoyancy control lead to no end of this fragile environment being damaged. Fin kicks and cylinders hitting the cave ceilings break away the sea mosses and corals on a daily basis.

Areas frequently visited by divers result in large pockets of waste air accumulating

under these overhangs. This air sometimes stays for hours or even days before filtering through the rock, also causing the death of many anemones, corals and sponges.

**D**uring the past few years, much has been written on this subject and in some countries action is being taken to control diving activities, such as in Egypt. Many dive centres try to make their divers more aware, but little or nothing is being done. It is time for all concerned, from certification agencies, diving schools, diving instructors and even travel organisations, to take a long and serious look at these problems. A complete revision in training programmes for divers is urgently needed.

Much more time should be spent on buoyancy control training, for example, and certainly a large part of any diver's course should include education to make everyone more aware of the marine life around them.

FRANCIS ABBOTT



Exploring the Red Sea: Egypt is controlling its dive sites

*The Bloom of a Million Butterflies*

The spectacular flora of Northern Cyprus is unlike anywhere in the world. Sitting amongst the multi colours of the Crown Anemone at Arapky Lawrence Durrell mused that 'the field appeared at first sight to be populated by a million butterflies'.

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## I want to see Pompeii — slowly



**THE** growing numbers of active senior citizens seeking bungee jumping or scuba diving holidays has seen tour operators catering extensively for demand in recent years. The sector is complemented by the backbone of coach tours and escorted groups available for holidaymakers of advancing years.

However, *Times* reader Jean Leffley does not want any of these options. As a single person, she wants to travel abroad and at a pace where she can "relax and potter". She wanted to visit Pompeii but could not find a tour operator who offered the site without it being part of a demanding itinerary.

"It is all right if there are two of you who can arrange a holiday tailored to your own requirements and pace. But for the solitary traveller, there is nothing designed for those who would like a less demanding schedule and a much more leisurely pace."

"I have had to take holidays abroad which are too busy and miss out some of the excursions, even though I have paid for them as 'included' in the considerable cost of the holiday."

Miss Leffley, of Stanmore, Middlesex, has developed an Italian passion late in life. She is aware of Page & Moy coach tours — "which I would hate, sightseeing and constant moving from place to place"

— and Saga, "possibly all right for the newly retired in good health".

A slower paced Italian odyssey for the less energetic traveller may prove difficult to find. Explore Worldwide, which includes many "easy" holidays in a brochure of 170 different options, has an eight-day tour based on Naples and Sorrento which includes Pompeii.

The average escorted group is between 18 and 22 people with visits to a number of archaeological sites. But there is travelling every day on the itinerary. Travers Cox, the managing director, says: "Our tours are structured, the sightseeing is planned and there is not a lot of free time. She could opt out but it defeats the object."

"On longer trips we build in the odd day off, but on shorter, archaeological trips the itinerary is completely full. She

is a bit in-between — perhaps she could look at other parts of the world with not so much movement built in."

Sunvil Holidays also runs escorted tours and is mindful of the energy levels of many clients. Dudley der Parthop, the director, says: "A lot of tours are for the elderly market, so we are not going to let them come home exhausted." However, Sunvil's definition of relaxed is still unlikely to match that of Miss Leffley's. Its ten-night tour of Cyprus, for example, involves stays in five hotels.

A cruise is the choice of many energetically challenged holidaymakers, with Swan Hellenic and P&O Cruises among those combining on-board lectures with shore excursions. But a land-based holiday is more of a problem. John Kirk of VFB Holidays, which specialises in escorted groups to France, says: "With the best will in the world, we want to accommodate people. But if it is not suitable, or it will hold other people up, then we tend to say 'no'."

"I think Miss Leffley would be much better suited with a standard package holiday where she can pick up the daytrip options she requires."

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Italy: A three-page special starts with an upwardly mobile home at Eurocamp; plus wine-lovers' countryside

Chianti is chic. Chianti is charming. Chianti is middle England's idealised vision of abroad. Indeed Chianti is the countryside they are keen to copyright. Could it possibly be right, then, to go and camp right in the middle of it?

To one whose middle-class ambitions had often focused on a prolonged sojourn — perhaps retirement — in some dream Tuscan farmhouse, the proposal smacked of sacrilege.

If not quite stealing beauty (to smuggle in the name of a recent film in which Tuscany's photogenically rolling countryside commanded the starring role), this was decidedly getting beauty on the cheap. I need not have worried. In the event the Girasole camping centre, up a side road from Figline Valdarno, gave fulfilment to the more modest aspects of my dreams without spoiling anyone else's.

The site is large, but in its older section, established 20 years ago, already blanketed in trees. Even the more recently installed, and still rather raw looking, gravel terraces on which our Eurocamp mobile homes were stationed didn't block anyone's view.

The single picturesque Tuscan villa on the pine-clad shoulder of hillsides overlooking the camp was the Villa Noreceni, owned by the campsite proprietors and let by them as holiday apartments to tourists who would not go without the security of four walls.

Mobile homes have walls, but they are thin ones. Only Japanese

paper ones come thinner. Many mobile homes are, of course, anything but mobile. Eurocamp's stay where they are put, complete with shower and toilet, gas cooker, fridge, and sitting room, atop a redundant undercarriage, like neatly arranged chalets on wheels.

Pull-out beds and bunks make a sleeping capacity, it is claimed, of eight, but that is horrible to contemplate. Two of us with one small bedroom apiece were perfectly comfortable. Three, or even four who knew each other well and got along reliably, would have been tolerable. After that, I imagine, horror stories begin.

Proper campers go under canvas. The tents, in fact, are better ventilated and insulated than the mobile homes, and are cooler by day and warmer at night. Truly mobile homes, though, particularly those belonging to Dutch, German and Swiss families, get to be very grand, cruising from site to site carrying a shed full of mountain bikes, a party-sized barbecue or two, satellite television and all manner of home comforts down, quite possibly, to a built-in Jacuzzi.

Camp sites are convivial places. Noises one heard were sometimes not from one's own caravan, but from next door. Without exception, though, the off-peak season visitors were quiet and considerate.

A site rule forbade vehicles



The Piazza della Cisterna in San Gimignano, left, is a favourite spot for drinking Chianti



entering after 10.30pm (some summer Germans and, sadly, Brits having sometimes abused a come-and-go-as-you-please regime). So our hut-patch of tents, vans, pavilions, Portakabins and trailers in the Tuscan sunshine resembled a well-ordered suburb, with two restaurants, a post office, a supermarket, souvenir shops, a public baths, tennis courts, football pitches, bowling greens, riding stables and swimming pools. There were no untoward disturbances, unless one counted a rowdy but good-

natured bunch of young Italians from Figline who chose the camp's excellent Taverna as the venue for a send-off to one of their number who had been called up for military service. The site's restaurants were good enough to attract regular local custom. The chef, Paolo Arnetoli and Marinella Raspini, gave cookery classes by special arrangement on two mornings during our stay. Young British mums who discovered the secrets of making *crostini* and *tiramisu* reckoned they were

good enough to be on television. The rest of the camp's crew, though, were a cosmopolitan crowd. The statuesque beauty behind the bar who looked as if she had just stepped out of a Ghirlandaio fresco was a Dane. The Claudia Cardinale lookalike behind the supermarket till was Irish. The barman who made perfect cappuccino was Spanish and the comely waitress was Australian. Some of the camp rules were strange, none more so than a

requirement that anyone using the swimming pool must wear a bathing cap. This applied, I was told, even to men, like me, who were completely bald. The most plausible justification advanced for the rule was that hair clogged the pool's filters, but no one suggested my beard needed wrapping.

By contrast, too, no headgear was available for two other camp pastimes where it might have been thought essential: horse-riding and scooter hire. The Irish Claudia Cardinale confided that her cousin had fallen off one of the scooters — and the doctors at the local hospital had not noticed that she had cracked a knee, a rib and a wrist, overlooking all three while strapping a supposedly strained tendon.

Undaunted by these omens I hired a scooter. The mileometer, speedometer, trafficators and horn did not work, but otherwise it was fine, and as long as one travelled on byroads, proved an invaluable way of getting about the countryside.

Greve in Chianti, with a wide open triangular market place, local hero's statue and traditional *macelleria* selling excellent *salami* and *prosciutto* proved the prize exhibit, but the roads between Radda and Strada were delightful.

I would not have dared ride the scooter into Florence or Siena,

though others did, but the camp was linked to the former by bus or by rail from Figline. One English couple were using the camp as a base for their detailed exploration of Florence, having decided that it was both more economical and congenial than staying in town.

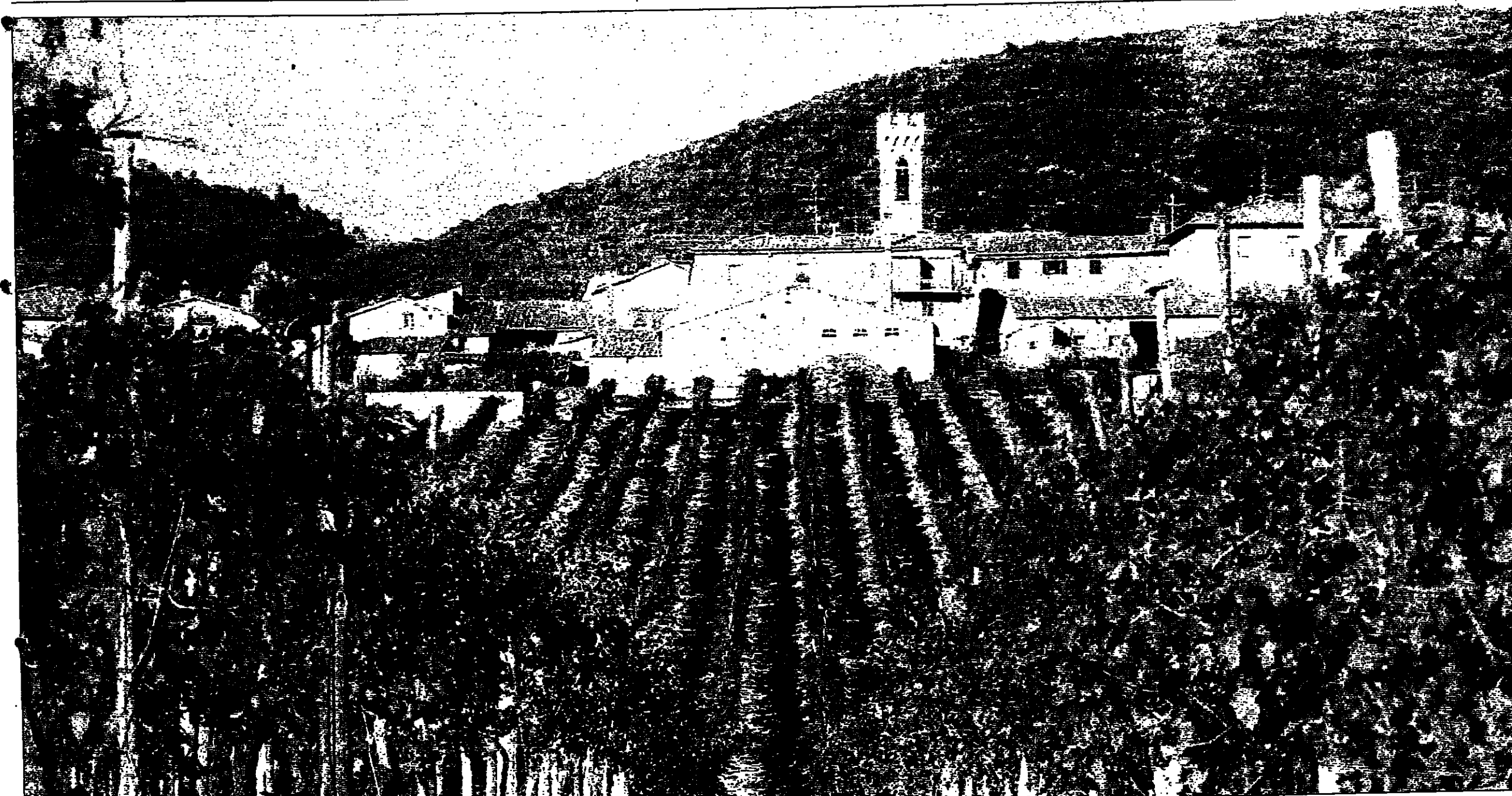
Tuscany is so rich in treasures that it becomes impossible to nominate favourites, but after the crowds in San Gimignano no one should miss Monteriggione, the perfect little fortified hilltop town that has scarcely altered since Dante described it in his *Inferno*. We had commendable meals at Al Marsili in Siena and Da Giannino in Florence. I found myself a well above average lunch at the Vignale in Radda, and we had an excellent dinner with fine wines at the Locanda Borgo Antico at Lucolena, on the way to Greve. Yet the outstanding meal was, appropriately, our last supper, at the Hotel Ristorante Santa Chiara, a restored 16th-century convent in Sarteano.

What we had saved on accommodation also enabled us to buy enough pasta, truffle cream, *salsicci*, *panforte* and olive oil to last till next spring, when, who knows, we might go camping around Chianti again.

ROBIN YOUNG

● The author camped at the Girasole centre, Figline Valdarno, as guest of Eurocamp (01565 050222). Mobile homes at the site cost from £465 a fortnight for two adults and up to four children; tents are £299 a fortnight for a couple and up to three children. Both rates include short sea crossings.

MICHAEL SHORT



Cosimo de' Medici, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, declared Chianti's 286 square miles the world's first grape-growing area more than 300 years ago. Chianti is made outside the area but Chianti classico is made only in these valleys

There is no doubt that Chianti is the Italy of Ravello's paintings in the flesh. Here men still walk through the woods to stalk rabbits and the wild boar snuffle along their tiny tracks just as they did five centuries ago when Uccello watched them, and then painted them. If you take the *strade vicinali*, the neighbourhood roads, that are not intended to join places so much as to give access to scattered houses and wine farms, you can discover an Italy that the flustered crowds beside the Ponte Vecchio will never see. "Dusty in summer, muddy in winter", as Barry Unsworth describes them on the first page of his magnificent new novel *After Hannibal*. There are thousands of miles of them wandering across the face of rural Italy. When such a road has reached your door, it has no necessary further existence;

it may struggle along somewhere else, or it may not. The *vicinali* provide the key to the secret Italy — in Chianti. In Chianti, these winding, often tracks that have etched their way into the heart of the landscape, are called the *strade bianche*, the white roads. They curl as secretly and as sinuously as the tendrils of the vines they pass. There is a world where there is scarcely a telephone pole or electricity cable, let alone a road sign; a world where the lark still sings uninterrupted. The white roads snake their way throughout the 286 square miles of Chianti, the

area Cosimo de' Medici, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, declared the world's first grape-growing area more than 300 years ago. From San Casciano in the north, they wriggle past cypresses and old stone farmhouses south towards Greve and on to the hilltop towns of Castellina, Radda and Gaiole, all of which proudly bear the title "in Chianti" after their name. From there, the *bianche* slither further south to the tiny village of Ponte al Buzzoni, within sight of the turreted walls of Siena. The *bianche* have hardly changed in centuries. In the first days of October I drove along them gingerly, nursing my hired Fiat Punto between the ruts and stones, bouncing across the tracks in second gear. With the autumn sun filtering through the trees, laying a patchwork of orange and red on the ground in front of me, it was an enchanted journey through the heart of their white magic. Every twist and turn in the road brought a surprise: an elderly farmhouse dog lying in the sun uninterested in any visitor; a wine tanker parked in the middle of the road for no reason; grape pickers sitting at the roadside eating their picnic lunch and laughing; a priest on a bicycle; the sudden, unexpected resonance of a single bell tolling from a tower. Sometimes the *bianche* threatened to peter out: the ribbon of rocks and rubble apparently coming to a halt at a precipice or a hairpin. But they never did. Sometimes

**FACT FILE**

■ **Cricketer Holidays** (01892 664242) offers one and two-week packages to Collelungo. Prices start from £801 for one week, and £1,310 for a fortnight, which includes return day-time flights from London Gatwick to Florence with Alitalia, airport taxes, all transfers, self-catering accommodation at Collelungo and the hire of a group B car from Hertz.

■ **Podera Collelungo**, 53011 Castellina in Chianti, Siena (00 39 577 740489).

■ **Reading: *Walking and Eating in Tuscany and Umbria***, by James Lasdon and Pia Davis (Penguin, £8.99). ***DH Lawrence and Italy*** (Penguin £7.99). ***Tuscany, Umbria and the Marches***, by Dana Facaros and Michael Pauls (Cadogan, £15.99).

**CHIANTI**

Florence

San Casciano

Strada

Figline Valdarno

Badia a Passignano

Greve

Panzano

Volpaia

San Donato in Poggio

Radda

Castellina

Gaiole

Vagliagli

Monteriggione

Siena

5 miles

the grapes must be picked when they are dry, and juiced quickly if the chianti is to be good. The grapes, and the wine that comes from them, are the staples of Chianti, as are the olives from the trees for their oil. The producers make the chianti beyond the borders of these narrow, magical valleys at the centre of Tuscany, but not far outside them, and the finest version — Chianti classico itself — comes from these valleys alone.

The wine consortium of the region is so proud of its history and its wine that it marks it with the *gallo nero*, the black rooster. This is the ancient emblem of the 14th-century Chianti Military League, which had its headquarters in Castellina in Chianti. Two centuries later, Giorgio Vasari included the rooster in his ceiling painting of the Salone dei Cinquecento in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. If you stay in Castellina in Chianti, with its tiny chapel to St Francis of Assisi in its main street, it is less than an hour's drive to Florence. That way, you can sneak up on the city, arriving at 5.30 on an autumn afternoon after a late lunch at an *osteria* on the white roads, and slip into the Uffizi without having to queue. Then, in the gathering dusk, you can take the autostrada south for a while, before turning east into the Chianti hills again and winding back through Machiavelli's home-

land by way of Sambuca and San Donato in Poggio. The plain behind you stretches away westwards towards the setting sun and the towers of San Gimignano fade to shadow on the horizon.

Or you can drive for 40 minutes from Castellina or Radda one morning and experience the splendour of the Piazza del Campo in Siena, before disappearing into one of that mysterious city's side streets for lunch, away from the worst of the crowds. You can be back in Chianti for a siesta by three o'clock, even if you do stop on the way for a grappa in Vagliagli.

I toured the *strade bianche* from a tiny new development just four kilometres outside Castellina called Collelungo, which means "the long hill". Here, 12 individually modelled apartments, all with their own gallery kitchens, have been painstakingly created over the past seven years by Tony Rocca, an English journalist, and his wife Mira.

Just a few minutes by car from Castellina, there have been dwellings on Collelungo's 200 acres of woodland, vineyard and olive grove since the Etruscans, but now the entire estate is being restored by the Roccas. The grapes and olives are to be harvested again, and the buildings have been carefully refurbished to retain their original features. Hidden at the foot of its own two kilometre-long and suitably named *strada bianca*, it is one of Chianti's newest secrets and opened its doors for the first time in the spring of 1996.

The 12 apartments are not the tiny attic rooms of Florence, for each has its own terrace and individual bathroom, and a hearth or wood-burning stove. Each also has its own view across the grapes towards the turrets of Castellina and provides an unsurpassable base for discovering Tuscany — and Chianti — in a style that those in pursuit of their own Room With a View over the Arno in Florence will never see. There could be no finer place from which to prove that Chianti is not, and never has been, a bit of a joke.

GEOFFREY WANSSELL  
● The author was a guest of Cricketer Holidays.

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Italy: The delights of sights old and new, from the laid-back cities and towns around the Bay of Naples ...

## Coast of song and the mount that roared

Sunday night at San Carlo opera house is a highly social occasion for the Neapolitans. As the lights go down, torches snap on in the six tiers of red and gold boxes and throughout the early evening performance of *Rigoletto* are noisily borrowed, reclaimed and offered to the people behind in order to follow the libretto.

When the wildly popular home-bred baritone Leo Nucci galloped through his third encore of *Vendetta si Tremenda Vendetta*, he had stepped out of the role of tragic father bent on revenge to one of grinning, bowing superstar. Drama swept aside and belief suspended, matrons in black wool suits and tight perms chanted "Verdi! Verdi!"

San Carlo, the pride of Naples since 1737, is famous for its acoustics but, purists be warned, the Neapolitans go to see the opera, not to hear it. Tickets are hard to get, but the rest of the city's great sights are accessible, uncrowded and a delight to visit, thanks to Naples' unhappy reputation

for crime and squalor that keep the tour buses away. I spent many hours wandering the steep, narrow streets of the old quarter of Spaccanapoli, and the Spanish steps, once notorious for street urchins, without feeling the slightest bit threatened. Of course, you should take care of your valuables, but the greatest hazards I encountered were being dripped on by the fountains of laundry that block the sky, and near-collisions with fast-moving pedestrians talking over their shoulders. Either the Vespa-riding bag-snatchers and pickpockets had given it up for Lent, or Naples has indeed become visitor-friendly once more.

Once a high spot on the Grand Tour, the home town of Sophia Loren, Enrico Caruso and the pizza, and where Nelson fell for Emma Hamilton, Naples is both ancient and modern, with fine churches, museums, restaurants, smart shops and wonderful views. Beneath Vesuvius, it spreads over steep hills down to a double bay. The



Seen from a boat on the azure sea, or the coast road, Positano is breathtakingly pretty, with its higgledy-piggledy layers of pink, cream and yellow-washed houses clinging to the cliff

recently renovated Capodimonte museum was originally built as a palace to display Charles of Bourbon's china collection. Its galleries now house a magnificent art collection, including works by Titian, Caravaggio, Goya and

Botticelli. The palace is in a large park with a splendid view. Another fine view is from the Museo Nazionale di San Martino, which has an amazing collection of Christmas cribs. The vast Museo Archeologico Nazionale has

the greatest collection of Roman art in the world, much of it salvaged from Pompeii. From the tourist office in the corner of Piazza Gesù Nuovo, start a walk of the old centre, called Spaccanapoli after the main street that once split

Naples. In the Chiesa di San Lorenzo Maggiore, see the Naples sandwich — the remains of the Greek agora, then the Roman forum, including shops layered beneath the 13th-century church.

Whichever way you turn there are churches containing splendid decorations and startling relics. The Sansevero chapel combines both. First marvel at the veiled Christ, sculpted in translucent alabaster then go down to the crypt.

Here, stand with wide-eyed schoolchildren before the display cases containing what claim to be two complete human cardiovascular systems — a gory web of preserved veins — removed from their bodies by an alchemist. Recover from the experience around the corner in the peace of the cloisters of Santa Chiara, decorated with ceramic tiles depicting scenes from the nuns' lives.

When the pleasure of walking wears off, the way to get up the hills is by funicular railway, more fun than taking the bus, though the bus routes cover more ground.

An alternative to staying in noisy Naples is to base yourself in quaint, easy-going Sorrento, across the Bay of Naples. Despite being perched on the most beautiful stretch of coast in the Mediterranean, Sorrento is not the place for a beach holiday. Best visited in spring and autumn when it is less hot and crowded, it makes a good centre for day trips.

Frequent trains on the Circumvesuviana railway go to Naples in an hour. The same train takes you to Pompeii — always a busy site but less so during the midday-3pm lunch period — and Ercolano station for Herculaneum, preserved for posterity by a river of mud after the same eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79 that covered Pompeii in ash.

Hydrofoils serve Capri, where visitors flock to the Villa San Michele, built by Dr Axel Munthe on the site of a Roman villa, which has Roman statues and a magnificent view.

Buses from the railway station go to Positano and Amalfi along the coast. In high summer Positano is popular with rich Italian holidaymakers. It was a postwar haven for artists and writers, most famously John Steinbeck. Now its steep, crooked streets are filled with shop doors covered in flapping beachwear, and day-trippers jostle for the limited space on which to sit, lie or stand. Yet seen from the coast road, or from a vessel on the azure sea, it is breathtakingly

pretty with its higgledy-piggledy layers of pink, cream and yellow-washed houses clinging to the cliff. Zeffirelli and Sting have villas there.

On ten miles to the less claustrophobic and more historically interesting village of Amalfi, once the greatest trading port of southern Italy.

The cathedral, one of the few remaining relics of the town's 11th-century heyday (most of it slid into the sea during the earthquake of 1343) dominates the main square, named after Flavio Gioia, the inventor of the compass. It is a Battenberg cake of a building in blocks of black and white check stone. The byzantine cast-bronze doors lead to an incongruous baroque interior. In the crypt is the head of St Andrew and next door the Chiostro del

summer, has lovely views and flower and fountain-filled terraces. Villa Cimbrone is another haven of tranquillity, with gardens laid out at the turn of the century by the eccentric English Lord Grimthorpe.

Or stroll along Via S. Giovanni del Toro to see palazzos converted into hotels, such as Hotel Caruso where Greta Garbo spent a summer with Leopold Stokowski and was besieged by the world's press, and the Hotel Palumbo, which has Baroque frescoes.

Return to base in Sorrento to recuperate from so much sightseeing. With a refreshing lack of architectural or archaeological wonders that must be seen, it is a wonderfully relaxing place to stay.

The cathedral, bell tower and museum are all there if you want them, but ambling about in the old quarter you can discover for yourself many little churches and old houses. Best of all is the green and yellow-tiled cupola of the Sedile Dominova, now a working men's club. With open arches on three sides, it provides a living tableau of cloth-capped elders playing cards under a frescoed ceiling. Passing in front of it, Via S. Cesare has many little shops selling handsome, long-stemmed artichokes and tomatoes on the vine.

Days in the Hotel Vittoria Excelsior, built on the spot where Emperor Augustus had his holiday villa, make a delightful change from squalid about. Purpose-built in 1834 and still family-owned, it is centrally placed between the main square and the port, yet buffered from the hurly-burly by a citrus-tree-lined avenue. The hotel is grand but not stuffy. Its airy Art Deco reception rooms are comfortable and uncrowded.

Beneath the dining room's richly frescoed ceiling we helped ourselves from the breakfast buffet.

The hotel terrace, with Roman busts on the balustrade, overlooks the port, and while the less fortunate have to totter up and down hundreds of steps, Vittoria Excelsior residents take the hotel's private lift.

Below await the striped blue and white deckchairs and postcard stand of Bar Ruccio, which serves perfect cappuccino to sip while watching others take the ferries that ply between Naples and Capri.

CAROLINE HENDRIE

● The author was a guest of Italian Escapades.

Stockholm. If you want to impress your friends.

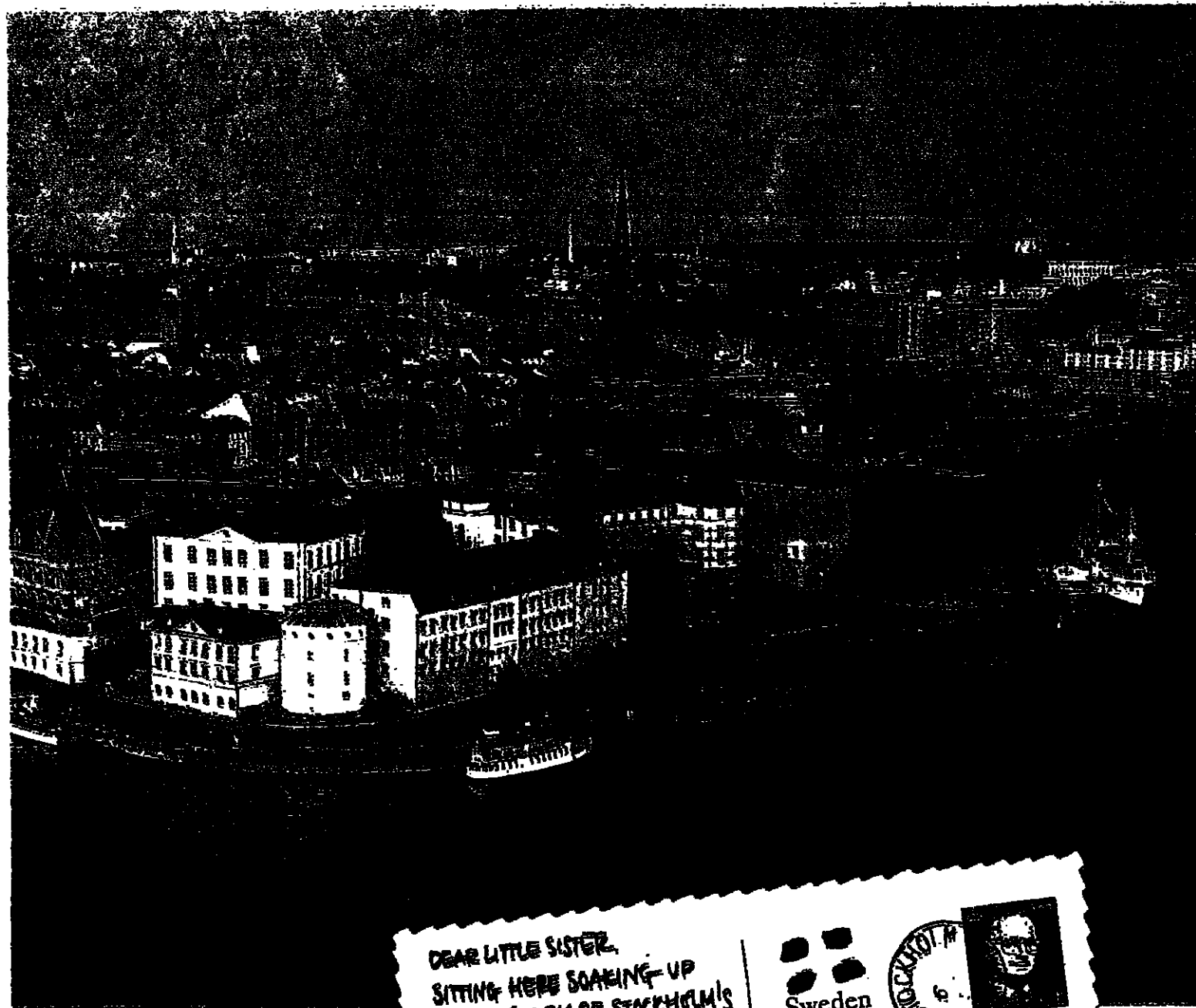


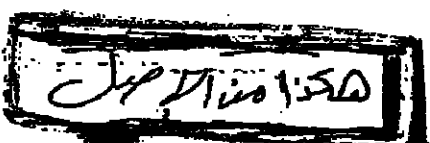
Photo: Richard Ryan. JVEA NEXLAN SWEDEN



DEAR LITTLE SISTER,  
SITTING HERE SOAKING UP THE HISTORY OF STOCKHOLM'S OLD TOWN. HAVE JUST SEEN THE CROWN JEWELS AT THE ROYAL PALACE. BEFORE THAT I VISITED THE MAGNIFICENT 17TH CENTURY VASA SHIP - AWE-INSPIRING! TONIGHT I'M GOING BY STEAMER TO GRISHOLM CASTLE TO SEE A VIKING PLAY. GREETINGS FROM PARADISE, CAROLINE KXX



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### NAPLES AND SORRENTO FACT FILE

■ Italian Escapades (0181-748 2661, brochures 01233 211612) offers a two-centre break staying at the Excelsior Vittoria, Sorrento, for four nights, and the Hotel Paradiso, Naples, for three nights from £744, including half-board in Sorrento, B&B in Naples and return flights from Gatwick.

■ Naples-only breaks are available from £274 for three nights, B&B and return flights. Three nights at the Excelsior Vittoria in Sorrento costs from £523 for half-board and flights.

■ Tickets for the San Carlo opera must be booked in advance by Italian Escapades as part of a package. For opera tickets only, call Liaisons Abroad on 0171-576 4020.

■ What's on in Naples: get a free copy of *Qui Napoli* magazine, in English and Italian, from the tourist office in the corner of Piazza Del Gesù.

■ Over 60s and under 18s are admitted free to state-run historic sites and museums, including Pompeii and the National Archaeological Museum in Naples on presentation of passport.



■ Reading: *Bay of Naples and the Amalfi Coast*, by Dana Fenners and Michael Pauls (Cadogan, £8.99). *Ramblings in South Italy*, by Edith Clay (Academy, £9.50). *The Island*, by Gustav Hering (Harvill, £6.99).

■ Restaurants: Naples - Bersagliera, Borgo Marinaro; traditional and expensive, very good fish. Pizzeria Brandi, Salita San'Anna Di Palazzo 112 established 1780, birthplace of the Margherita pizza: lively atmosphere, perfect pizzas. Gamberini, Art Nouveau cafe, opposite Teatro San Carlo at the end of Via Chiaia: good coffee, cake and ice-creams. Sorrento - the Ristorante Caruso: good fun for a gramophone. Pa Gligino: friendly, good value pizzeria. Ravello - Palazzo Della Marra: gastronomic menu, medieval recipes.

■ Italian State Tourist Office, 1 Princess Street, London W1R 8AY (0171-408 1254).



# High art seen with hard cash



what everybody comes to see and even if, like me, you soon tire of flying cherubs delicately veiling their private parts, the colour and the draughtsmanship are a wonder to behold. I wish I could rid myself of the idea that half the people here are chocolate box designers on a human's holiday.

They used to belong to tradespeople such as butchers and tanners who needed a handy waste disposer — the river suited them ideally — but now the bridge is populated by jewellers who must throw anything away even before looking at some of the gaudy displays, they might well be advised to do so.

and ornate contrast to the harsh exterior. The museums and galleries within the Palazzo Pitti have their own opening and closing times and charge separately. Be prepared. Ferry cash is always handy in Florence and never more so than when the entrance turnstiles are clicking.

**BARRY TURNER**

● The author was a guest of Kirker Holidays.

Another warning: before setting off to walk around Florence, be aware of the neurotic relationship between pedestrians and drivers on either four or two wheels. They all go at

■ **Reading:** *Blue Guide to Florence* (A & C Black, £10.99). *Eyewitness Travel Guide to Florence and Tuscany* (Dorling Kindersley, £12.99). *Everyman Guide to Florence* (£16.99). *A Room with a View*, by E.M. Forster (Penguin, £6.99). *Florence — the biography of a city*, by Christopher Hibbert (Penguin, £15).

Now is the time to hit the cultural high spots. The Uffizi seems to be the favourite, understandably, since this is where the Medici family, rulers of Florence for 300 years, housed the best part of their fabulous art collection. The Botticelli paintings are

board and all visits are included in the price of £1,095.

## Island idyll

THE AEOLIAN islands rarely appear in British tour brochures, but Magic of Italy (0181-748 7575) has introduced hotel and self-catering holidays to Vulcano and Lipari, with a week in a studio flat in Lipari costing £515-£669. A week's tour visiting six islands starts from £945.

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International: From Ontario's tranquil countryside to the splendour of a magnificent Indian manuscript

# Rapid action in the great outdoors



Our leader ended his briefing with a po-faced aside: "For the benefit of any Americans present, I will be happy to repeat it at half-speed." Canadians dislike being patronised by their southern neighbours, and are happy to seize any opportunity to return fire. It is good-humoured — almost.

The rest of us tittered nervously. Dressed in wetsuits and carrying crash helmets and paddles, we were about to undergo what for most of us was our first experience of white-water rafting. What had promised to be a jolly day out on the river was, after the recital of potential hazards, becoming an increasingly formidable prospect.

Any lingering comparison with a picnic on the Chertwell disappeared as we set forth on the mighty Ottawa River, which for about 400 miles forms the border between Ontario and Quebec before joining forces with the St Lawrence at Montreal. Broad and beautiful, it flows past granite cliffs and evergreen forests, its serenity periodically disturbed by cascades of rapids which provide thrills and spills for tourists and power for a series of hydroelectric generating stations.

As we approached our first rapid we were urged in parade-ground language to paddle harder and harder; the raft, a large, inflatable rubber dinghy accommodating up to 12 people, must maintain its momentum through the turbulence or the helmsman loses control.

A wave of water enveloped us. Two members of our group, who had disregarded instructions to wedge their feet beneath the thwart, were abruptly swept overboard. Rosie, my daughter, at 23 the youngest in the party, crowded and shrieked with delight.

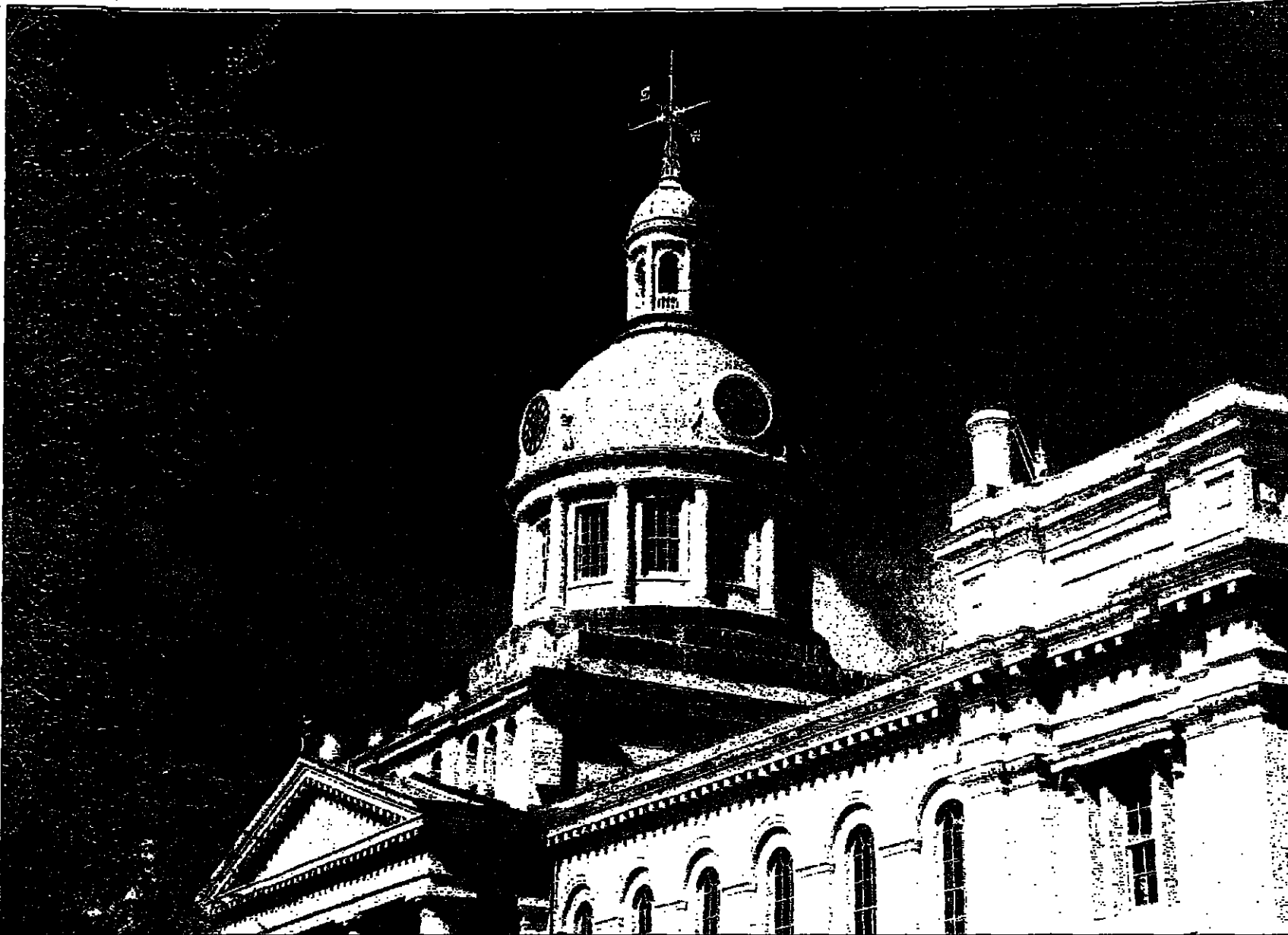
Her glee was not, alas, shared by her father. Memories of struggling to right capsized sailing dinghies have left me with a strong aversion to sudden dunkings in cold water, wetsuit or no. We paddled ashore to sit on the rocks and get our breath back, while our guide offered any of us who wanted to quit the option of continuing on foot down the river bank — which, he suggested, might prove even more uncomfortable.

For a few moments I toyed with the idea. But no. A man cannot appear chicken in front of his daughter. Besides, we now knew what to expect and, sure enough, each of the subsequent rapids, all given suitably alarming names, became progressively less terrifying. By the time we reached the last and biggest, we had become almost blasé.

Safely ashore, we basked in the warm sunshine and a glow of achievement, watching the bucking and twisting of the rafts following astern. French and German tourists, we were told, often ask their guides to arrange deliberate capsize just for the thrill of it. No wonder the British had a better navy.

Our tour of eastern Ontario had begun on an altogether quieter note in the little town of Merrickville, on the Rideau River, about 50 miles south of Ottawa. Although I had lived in Canada for several years, this region was new to me, a tranquil countryside of woods, dairy farms and slumbering villages.

Sam Jake's Inn, dating from 1861 with elegant colonial verandas overlooking the



Colonial splendour: City Hall in Kingston, situated on the shores of Lake Ontario and no longer living in the shadow of Toronto at the other end of the lake

Rideau Canal, was friendly and comfortable. The town takes its name from William Merrick, one of the brave and determined band of United Empire Loyalists who fled the American Revolution and settled in what was then Upper Canada (Quebec was known as Lower Canada). By the end of the 18th century he had established a thriving sawmill powered by the nearby waterfall.

The canal was the result of the War of 1812. After rebuffing American attempts to "liberate" Canada, the British appointed Colonel John By to build a navigable waterway providing a safe passage between Montreal and Kingston on Lake Ontario. The settlement at the northern end of the canal, named Bytown in his honour, was later renamed Ottawa and designated by Queen Victoria as the new national capital, a compromise between

the rival claims of English and French Canada. Thirty years ago Kingston was a run-down, unprepossessing sort of place, having long since been overtaken in economic importance by Toronto at the other end of the lake. But confidence was partly restored by hosting the yachting events at the 1976 Olympics, and the waterfront has been restored to life with hotels, restaurants and marinas.

The immaculately preserved Fort Henry military barracks, high on a hill overlooking the lake, are a deservedly popular attraction. An authentic touch is provided by volunteer "extras" dressed in 18th-century British uniforms. Our guide, a handsome young university student, provoked palpitations among the female members of our party.

From Kingston, in the summer months, there are regular sightseeing cruises through the scenic Thousand Islands strung across the peaceful international border where Lake Ontario narrows into the St Lawrence. A little further downstream is Upper Canada Village, an enchanting recreation of a colonial settle-

ment of the mid-19th century. Eschewing modern audiovisual aids and other interpretative gimmicks, it provides an object lesson in how to bring the past to life.

There are houses and shops, a farm, dairy and bakery, flour mill, sawmill and wool factory, printer, blacksmith and cabinet-maker, post office and tavern, church and chapel. The various buildings are staffed by a mixture of actors playing the parts of settlers, and skilled craftsmen and women dressed in period costumes but running their businesses on strictly commercial lines.

And so on to Ottawa and a big surprise. In the 1960s, Canada's capital seemed to be going nowhere, the seat of an unpopular federal government and little else, unable to compete with the metropolitan sophistication of Montreal or the wealth of Toronto. Federal government is still unpopular, especially in the far western provinces, but Ottawa itself has changed almost beyond recognition.

High on a bluff overlooking the river, the Parliament buildings, modelled on the

Palace of Westminster and rebuilt after a disastrous fire at the height of the First World War, dominate the skyline. But since 1988 they have been complemented by the nearby National Gallery of Canada, a soaring glass and granite palace, designed by the Montreal architect Moshe Safdie, which even the grumpiest critics of modern architecture would find hard to fault. A sneak preview of a gloriously eclectic Corot exhibition was a special treat.

In the interests of national unity, federal money has been pumped into the undistinguished French-speaking suburb of Hull, on the opposite side of the river, most notably in the construction of the grandiose Museum of Civilisation. For all the brilliance of the presentation, and its obvious popularity with young people, I found a more evocative recollection of the nation's history in the War Museum, just down the road from the National Gallery.

Ottawa is not just museums, however. With a population of about one million, it is a well planned, spacious, cosmopolitan city with an abundance of good restaurants, shops and hotels. We stayed in considerable luxury at the Château Laurier, one of the chain of former railway hotels which stretch across the country, now lavishly restored by its owners, Canadian Pacific, in a style to match its glitzy past.

Canadians in other parts of the country may thumb their noses, but Bytown has come a long way.

JOHN YOUNG

● The author was a guest of Ontario Tourism.

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## Glorious story of an emperor

If you have ever been to northern India or are considering a trip there, it is worth hurrying along first to the Queen's Gallery at Buckingham Palace. On show there, but only until April 27, is an Indian manuscript whose paintings have a wondrous beauty. It is on loan from the Queen's art collection.

The book has been unbound so that each of its 46 magnificent illustrations can be hung round the walls ready for curious eyes to pore over the richness and detail, from scenes of hunting to wedding processions, fireworks parties and sieges of great forts.

After April 27, the manuscript will tour the United States and then return to the Royal Library at Windsor Castle to be rebound. It will probably never be exhibited in public again.

It is called the *Padshahnama*, meaning story of the emperor. And it is just that, recounting the most glorious episodes of the reign of the great Mogul emperor, Shah Jahan. It illustrates the best ones with some of the most detailed, colourful and glowing paintings to have come out of the imperial workshops. It may be the arabesques of a silk carpet, the Benares brocade of a courtier's coat or the simple observations of a farmer ploughing or a man hauling up water from a well.

The whole of Mogul India is here, precise in its tender portraits, in the transparency of fine Dhaka muslin and in the rich palette of hot oranges and reds, rich purples and greens, soft lilacs, yellows and aquamarines.

Shah Jahan, who built the Taj Mahal, was the fifth of the six great Mogul emperors who ruled most of the sub-continent in the 16th and 17th centuries. They lived hard: they were great soldiers, relentless campaigners, often hard drinkers, partial to opium, devout Muslims and, not least, tremendous art patrons. Shah Jahan was all this. Several paintings celebrate his triumphs over Rajput rulers

before his accession; later ones show him presiding over the lavish courts of Agra, Delhi and Lahore, going on a lion hunt, making a pilgrimage to the Sufi saint's shrine at Ajmer and receiving gifts from Europeans. During his rule from 1627 to 1658, Shah Jahan made India the marvel of all travellers.

With the decline of the Mogul empire in the 18th century the Nawab of Oudh snapped up the *Padshahnama* for a reputed £1,500, a considerable sum. No wonder, too, that in 1799 it was the ultimate diplomatic gift, presented by his son to Lord Teignmouth for George III's extensive library. And when that library was given to the British Museum, the *Padshahnama* was deemed so great a treasure that it was kept back and lodged at Windsor.

LOUISE NICHOLSON



Delivery of wedding gifts: detail from the *Padshahnama*

### WORD WATCHING

Answers from page 27

LAMA

(b) Gold or silver cloth, originally made in Spain, the original European depot for the treasures of the New World. In Spanish, literally, plate. "A dress of silver lama over French lilac."

MOORSTONE

(a) A kind of granite found chiefly in Cornwall. 1842: "Moorstone, a species of granite found in Cornwall and some other parts of England, and very serviceable in the coarser parts of a building."

LICKPENNY

(c) Someone/something that makes the money go. Dryden, *Love Triumphant*, 1694: "She has two devils in her eyes; that last ogle was a lickpenny."

MAULSTICK

(a) A stick used by painters as a support for the right hand, and held in the left. The upper end is surmounted by a ball of leather-covered cotton-wool. From the Dutch *maelstok*, *maelen* to paint + *stok* a stick. Kipling, *The Light that Failed*: "I'd let you go to the deuce on your own mahlstick [variant spelling]."

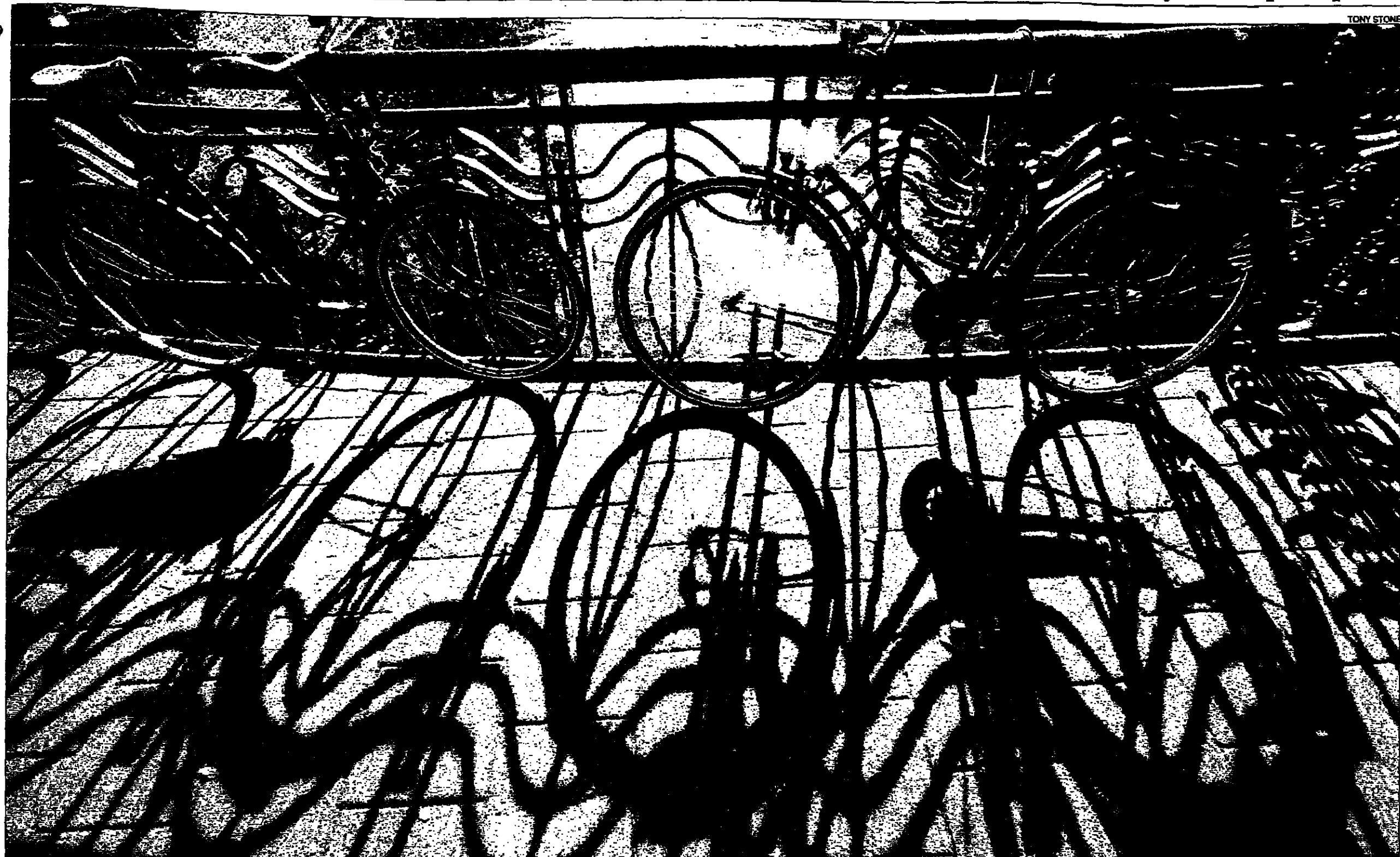
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## City break: Amsterdam's fine art and friendly people – in spite of its red light area the city is a capital place



Bicycles are everywhere in Amsterdam but there do not appear to be any laws of the road for cyclists. A lot of them keep to the right and a lot to the left, and tourists have no way of knowing who is going to do what

# Lots of bicycles and bare-faced cheek

Amsterdam is a surprise package wrapped in images – your own preconceived images. Most people know it is a city built around a series of canals – 160 of them. The surprise comes from finding out just how much those canals reveal. In a way, they are like the streets and avenues of New York – find one and you will find them all. Add a collection of sights on the way and it is, says the city's tourist office, a place where you can see more places of interest than in any other capital in the world.

"Wait a minute," I said to my guide. "Amsterdam isn't the capital, is it? It's The Hague." That's what I was told at school. The Government operates from The Hague. The Dutch Queen lives in The Hague, too. The law courts are there as well. Amsterdam is just... the capital. Which gives you some idea of why someone called it The Surprise Capital.

The one thing that is perhaps no surprise is that the authorities try to hide one of its best-known features. "People in Amsterdam," they say, "are not shy." Yet you will find no mention in the guidebooks of well, let's go back to what the lady in the tourist office assures me they are not shy of. As she said: "They don't like curtains in their windows and so they don't mind people looking in. Even at night, when they have their lights on, you can take a peek at what is going on behind the glass, look into their rooms and they won't object."

What she really wanted me to do was to study the wooden furniture and the light fittings of which people are so proud. She would rather I had not mentioned the directions to the one window display that every hotel concierge has on his lips as though it were a pre-recorded message, the one in which ladies can be seen sitting in various stages of undress. The authorities know that the sex industry brings in a huge amount of foreign capital (more British visitors than any other nationality).

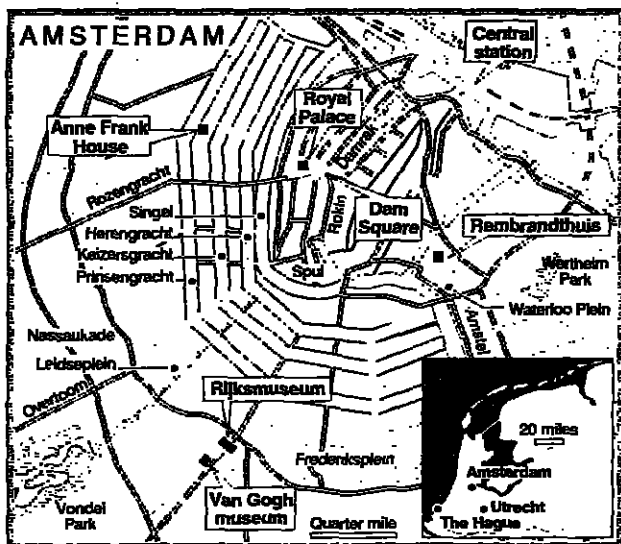
There is street after street of it, and it is totally within the law, but the Dutch officials make a valiant effort to pretend that tourists come from the four corners of the world to study their wardrobes.

The tourists also come, of course, to see the tulips, miles and miles of them in fields just a short ride away from the centre of the city. But, naturally, that can only be in season. I have just come back from a stay in which there were no tulips. There were no canal rides either – the waterways were frozen and, just a few weeks earlier, 10,000 people had skated on them in the biggest (and coldest) celebration of its kind in 25 years.

You need at least three days to fit in not just all the sights, but simply to get the flavour of the place, because Amsterdam is not like any other city I know. It has few tall buildings and few wide roads (although they do exist and there is the central Dam Square, from which both the royal palace and the red light district lead). The inhabitants are friendly. Ask an elderly lady the way to the Van Gogh museum and she will take you there. As the guide said, they are not shy. Sit in a café and the man at the next table will advise you which strudel to choose. Seemingly, everyone speaks English – including the road sweeper who directed me to the restaurant I wanted.

In a way, Amsterdam is infuriatingly different. If you want that cup of coffee, look for a coffee house. A coffee shop is where you go (legally) to smoke cannabis. And the streets are where you try to avoid being run over by a bicycle. People seem to have a built-in radar to spot a silent Raleigh coming from east or west – or, if you cross one of the arched bridges over the canals, from north or south. There do not appear to be any laws of the road for a bike. A lot of them keep to the right and a lot to the left, and you have no way of knowing who is going to do what.

By the canal side, what looks like the pavement is really a road. The pavements are about 18 inches wide and usually blocked by fallen railings, ladders, bicycles and winches used to haul those wardrobes into a top window. All this seemed to fit in perfectly with the clog shop over the road from the central station. There was a notice on the door – in English, of course: "Please be careful as you come in. There are live chickens walking around." There was also a live turkey. I suppose if I had wanted a pair of clogs, I would have had to find a shop selling chickens.



With or without clogs, you should walk. There are taxis – dreadfully expensive – and there are some of the most comfortable trams I have ever known, but you "do" this city on foot. Ask the hotel doorman how to get to the Rijksmuseum and he will tell you it is a ten-minute walk. Want to go to the railway station? That is ten minutes. To the flower market (a must, even out of season)? Ten minutes "no more". To the Anne Frank House? "Down the road – about ten minutes."

I decided to spend the first full day taking ten-minute walks to the museums and tourist spots. The second day was reserved for a train trip out of town. The third was to "mop" up what I had missed so far. It worked well. I went to the Rijksmuseum first – a big railway station of a place (the station itself looks rather like a museum) that boasts one treasure that alone would make visiting Amsterdam worthwhile: Rembrandt's *The Night Watch* is a magnificent canvas covering a vast wall. There are copies everywhere (bizarrely, including one in an adjoining room at this same museum as well as other Rembrandts and works by Dutch masters) but this is all on its own in more ways than one.

The Rembrandthuis at the other end of town, where the artist did much of his work, is fascinating. It is furnished as it was in his day and his early drawings are on show. The only things miss-

ing are Rembrandt paintings. All the really good ones, except *The Night Watch*, are in America or at the Hermitage in St Petersburg.

The city does well in recognising its artistic heritage, even though it does charge entry to all the museums (you can buy an Amsterdam pass, which will admit you to most and give discounts at others). At the Van Gogh museum just round the corner from the Rijksmuseum, there are more than 200 pictures including a version of *Sunflowers*. There are also numerous paintings from his "black period", worked on before he established his own style.

It was, I have to admit, a tram ride away from the museums to the Royal Palace, which the Dutch Queen uses only for ceremonial occasions and which is open to the public



The sex industry brings in a lot of foreign capital

### AMSTERDAM FACT FILE

- KLM and its partners, Air UK and Transavia, (0990-750900) operate from 18 airports in the UK and Ireland. Return fares start from £79 (London Heathrow), £91 (Southampton), £99 (Cardiff) and £164 (Manchester), all plus tax.
- Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam has its own railway station from which double-decker trains leave regularly for the 20-minute journey to the centre of the city.
- Rooms at the five-star Pulitzer Hotel (including a large buffet breakfast and free copies of *The Times*) range from 540 guilders (£200) per night for an "exclusive double room" to 390 guilders (£140) per night for a "superior" single room (0031-20-523-5235). A suite costs 1,075 guilders (£398) per night.
- An Amsterdam pass providing discounts at shops, restaurants and for excursions, and free entrance to certain museums and to see diamond polishing in progress, costs 29.90 guilders (£10) from any tourist office.
- Reading: *The Fall*, by Albert Camus (Penguin, £5.99). *Cadogan Guide to Amsterdam*, by Rodney Hague (New Holland, £8.99). *Blue Guide to Amsterdam* (A & C Black, £8.99).

most of the year. It is a vast, echoing place that looks like a cross between Harrods food hall and an under-endowed stately home. But you can go into the huge banqueting hall and see the marble-walled room that was once used only for passing death sentences (in the days when this was both town hall and law courts).

Utrecht, half an hour by train away from Amsterdam, was an unexpected revelation on my second day. I had heard of the Treaties of Utrecht – signed after the Wars of the Spanish Succession, although there was no one in the tourist office who could explain what they were about – but not about the long avenue of shops and restaurants along its own canal or about the Barrel Organ Museum.

That was a real surprise. Not just the sort of shabby barrel organs that used to be played on our city streets, but great Wuritzer-type affairs and organs made 200 years ago, as well as music boxes playing discs and paper rolls that were 100 years old, and a 19th-century jukebox (you put in your money and choose a punched disc and it will play the tune you want to hear). There was one organ from 1910 that automatically played three violins as well as a piano and sounded like a good quartet.

The building the museum occupies is a deconsecrated church – as is the one where the Catherine the Great exhibition is held – which strikes me as a sensible way of

keeping open remarkable buildings that have outlived their congregations. I left the National Museum van Speelklok in Utrecht feeling I had had a great afternoon, stopping only once on the way to the station – to listen to the barrel organ.

There was different music for me later – Schubert's Unfinished Symphony and Mozart's Fifth played by the Royal Orchestra at the Concertgebouw, a superb interpretation in one of the best acoustically endowed halls I know. Anne Frank House on my third day couldn't have offered a greater contrast. Even in midwinter, people queue to see the place where she and her family lived in hiding and where the diary was written. The house on the Prinsengracht has been renovated, but only to make it safe. The old wallpaper, with the pictures of film stars Anne stuck to the walls, remains but there is no furniture. It was all destroyed when the families living there were rounded up and the building's trustees wanted nothing that was not in place the day the Nazis knocked on the door.

But it is enough to see the bookcase behind which they all hid, to examine the bare sink in the kitchen, where they cooked their meagre meals, and the single lavatory. There are pictures and a video display on the ground floor, showing the Frank family before they were taken off to the death camp.

The Franks, a Jewish family who had fled their native Germany when the Nazis moved in, were latecomers to Amsterdam but the community they joined was one of the oldest in Europe. The candlelit Portuguese synagogue, built in the 17th century, is open to all and is one of the most gracious houses of worship in

the city. It was copied in every detail by the people who created what is now London's oldest synagogue, the one opened at Bevis Marks in the City in 1701.

I went to the Amsterdam building after a refreshing walk from the Anne Frank House, stopping to peer into the smart boutiques of the Jordaan area – a cross between Hampstead and Chelsea – to have some of the best coffee (and strudel) I have ever tasted. An hour or so later I sampled a bag of delicious chips from one of the street vendors.

In the evenings I could have taken advantage of one of the eateries of which Amsterdam is particularly proud – those serving Indonesian cuisine – but I chickened out and went Dutch instead.

Three nights in Amsterdam and three different meals, all of them in shabby bistrot-like places without cloths on the tables. But if that is the way the people of Amsterdam like their restaurants, I am not going to argue.

At each one, the Lucius fish restaurant, the Restaurant de

Roode Leeuw and the Sluizer, meals were beautifully cooked and presented and served by courteous waiters. Was the Dover sole satisfactory? I said it was the best I had ever eaten. In the second restaurant, how about the vegetable soup? I said I was delighted they had left the tureen on the table. How was the omelette at the Sluizer? If I had had room to finish it, I might have been able to convey just a little of how magnificent it was.

My hotel was equally enjoyable. The Pulitzer is a five-star establishment, put together from a series of old houses facing the canal. It has its own boat – when the water is not frozen – an elegant restaurant and a smaller place for coffee or lunch. Every room is different. "We have original paintings here," said the PR lady. "Who knows, you could wake up and find you are sleeping with an old master." Which I thought made a change for visiting businessmen.

**MICHAEL FREEDLAND**

The author was a guest of the Netherlands Board of Tourism and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines.

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Where are a b

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Jill Parkin visits the new London Aquarium and Nigel Hawkes tries a sporting exhibition at the Science Museum

# Where sharks are a bit mean

You have been queuing outside the London Aquarium for a long time, distracting bored children with sightings of London buses on Westminster Bridge and small boats pulling big boats on the river. Once inside, you go through the bag search and pay £20 for your family ticket.

Three floors — 170,000 square feet as the transatlantic voice on the Aquarium's taped phone message tells you — await you.

The children are hungry and you could use a coffee. Do one floor and then have a break in the cafe? The cafe first? Neither. Once you're in the Global Cafe and Bar of "the capital's first and only world-class experience of underwater life", there's no going back. Exit only, herded through a narrow gift shop — and no re-admission.

Like some whale swallowing lots of little fish, the aquarium has a simple linear digestion system. In, through and out. No hanging around. And certainly no Jonahs.

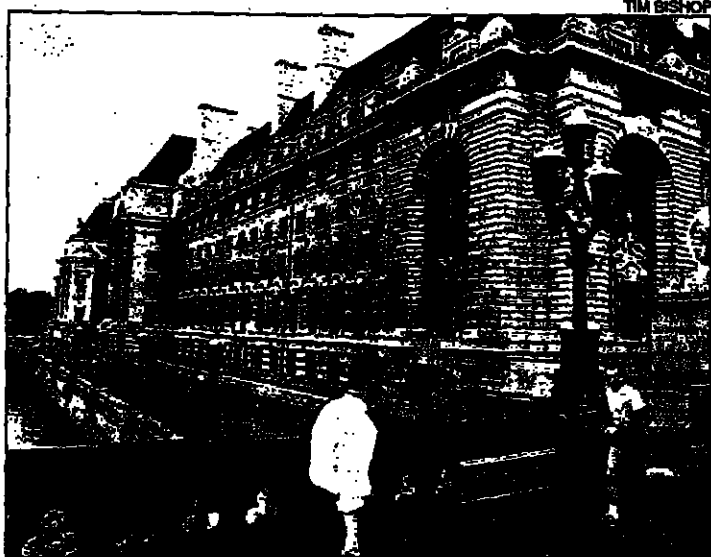
The aquarium was opened by the Japanese company Shurayama on Good Friday, in time for the school hols. We gave it a week to settle down. It wasn't enough.

There are some beautiful things on the ground floor, basement, and sub-basement of County Hall, once the home of the disbanded Greater London Council, but we left feeling we'd had rather a mean experience.

It didn't start well. I'm sure that, in their way, rainbow trout are as fascinating as piranhas and giant squid, but the first part of our visit was a bit like a stroll along a supermarket chill cabinet. It's cavernous and very dark. Other aquaria seem to have a better grasp of using spotlights to keep fish and folk happy. You're always aware of being in a London basement. It seems little attempt has been made to re-create maritime scenes.

One of the two central pools, which you can see from different levels, has two enormous and spectacular eastern-looking heads, apparently carved from rock. The setting was remarkable, but it deserved a better stock of marine life. We made the best of pointing out the few sharks to the children, but compared with shark displays they've seen in provincial towns, it was disappointing.

I suppose it was bad luck that the escalator wasn't working (it stopped amid security checks for first-aid), but there must have been a better way



The old County Hall, now home to the London Aquarium

of handling the problem than herding visitors up the immobilised escalator with instructions to "keep to the left because there's a piece of metal sticking out of the top". Perhaps more than one escalator might not be a bad idea for the expected thousands of visitors a day this summer.

Lots of the notices telling you which way to go, where the exit is, and exactly how to tickle a ray are just photocopied sheets. A rush job for the holidays. But far worse than that is the lack of really good information. Notices by the tanks are few, extremely brief, and far too high for all but the oldest children.

My five-year-old daughter and three-year-old son were fascinated by a fish with a long snout, but there was nothing to tell us what it was or anything about it. We watched some wrasse, and the five-year-old piped up: "Mummy, isn't that the one we've seen in the Sea Life Centre, that changes from being a man to a lady?" Very possibly, but there was nothing to tell us. The private lives of fish are very private indeed at the London Aquarium.

In a shallow-waters display, blennies swam among sea anemones, but there was nothing about the anemones at all. We were constantly lifting the children up to see above the crowds in front of each tank. There seemed to be remarkably few displays for such a

large area. But there were two memorable tanks. The children loved the one filled with bright, fancy fish, and I stared for a while at the translucent and lovely moon jellyfish.

Our children have been entranced in various Sea Life Centres. They have stared for ages at the fish in the Tropical World in Roundhay Park in Leeds, which is free. A morning of seahorses, scary shark tunnels, octopuses, catfish and crabs is just up their street. But the London Aquarium — for all its space — is poor value. There are said to be 350 species here, but it doesn't feel like it.

The children felt they'd had a long dark walk with less than exciting fishy interludes and couldn't wait to get out for an ice-cream. It took us more than five minutes to squeeze through the gift shop, not including the time spent buying two fish balloons (£1.99 each) at the exit.

Next we spent £10.40 on a river trip between Westminster Bridge and Tower Bridge and the children had a good time waving their fish balloons about.

Back home, they told their grandparents they'd been on a train, in a taxi, on a boat and in a bus. And they never mentioned the capital's first and only major experience of underwater life.

For admission details, ring the London Aquarium on 0171-967 8000. Tickets £6.50, £4.50 for children aged three to 14, £20 for a family ticket.



Alan Stewart, the chief diver at the London Aquarium, in the "Pacific Tank", with its sharks, small fry and stone Easter Island figures

## Cashing in on good sports

Now that taking a couple of sons to a football match requires a deep breath and a deep pocket, some fathers may be tempted to choose a museum instead. The Science Museum in South Kensington, London, where marketing now looms at least as large as scholarship, cannot be accused of neglecting the opportunity.

The museum has just opened an exhibition called the Science of Sport and, as Middlesbrough took on Leicester in the Coca-Cola Cup final last Sunday, the gallery was packed with would-be Ravanellis having a go. If some of their fathers were looking slightly shell-shocked, it may be because this money-saving trip hadn't worked out quite as they had hoped.

The Science of Sport isn't a museum gallery as you or I remember one. There's hardly an interesting object to be seen, old or new, save the beautiful Formula 1 McLaren-Mercedes driven, I think, by David Coulthard in last year's championship. Confirmation of this would have been a help, but last Sunday there wasn't a trace of information about the car, the driver, or how well it had performed.

The bulk of the gallery is taken up by try-it-yourself demonstrations of various sports. Remarkably, the youngsters formed orderly queues to do things you could do just as easily and with a lot more fun in a gym, or the back garden: kicking a football at a goal, throwing things about,



Children try out the sport simulators at the Science Museum in South Kensington

hitting a few tennis balls. There is a rock wall to clamber across, with hand and foot holds and a soft landing to avoid injury, and a short section of running track where you can test your speed off the blocks. By far the most original display is virtual volleyball, where the ball is shown crossing a screen on which the participants can see themselves in silhouette as they jump for it. The feeblest is the simulated snowboard, where

you simply balance on wobbling snowboards. The science part of the exhibition includes a machine that analyses the nutritional value of a meal (sponsored by Shredded Wheat), a board with buttons and flashing lights to assess reaction times and rowing and pedalling machines with read-outs of speed and calories consumed. There is nothing on the aerodynamics of sport, though how footballers "bend" a shot around the defensive wall, or golfers shape a hook around the trees.

The principal sponsor is Adidas, so sports shoes get a cabinet to themselves. Even this is a missed opportunity. Behind the display is a marvellous picture of Les Ferdinand in full cry but the sports shoes are not those of actual sportsmen, with the exception of Stan Smith's tennis shoes. Real boots, worn by real players to score goals, would have made this look less like a shoe shop.

I didn't sample the simulators which demonstrate the thrill of bobsleighs, Grand Prix cars, motorbikes, or skis. They look good, but they cost an extra £2, on top of the £5.95

for adults to get into the museum (£3.20 for children) and the £3 (children £2) to get into Science of Sport. And, in case the point isn't made clearly enough, the only way out of the exhibition is through a shop selling sports gear.

The exhibition is open for the next 18 months, and the museum hopes to pull in an extra 300,000 visitors over that period. Hugh Roderick, its head of marketing and communications, says: "We want people to come away with a better understanding of the important role that science plays in sport. We also want to attract young people who previously haven't considered visiting the Science Museum, and convince them that the museum has a lot to offer in terms of fun and learning."

A worthy ambition, and I hope it works. The children there last Sunday were having fun, even though the show is neither proper sport, nor solid science. It is best suited to under-10s. There are some lengthy queues, and it isn't an especially cheap day out.

Science Museum, Exhibition Road, London SW7 5BD (0171-938 8000). Science of Sport exhibition open 10am-4.30pm every day until September 1998.

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"What can I do with that old barn?"

See p. 26



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## CHESS

## by Raymond Keene

THE chess world has been surprised recently by a spate of successes by young players. Regular readers of my daily column will have noticed there a win by nine-year-old Gwyn Jones against the international master Malcolm Pein, chess correspondent of *The Daily Telegraph*. Gwyn achieved the distinction of becoming the youngest player ever to have taken a game in an official tournament off an international master.

Not to be outdone, the 14-year-old French boy Etienne Bacrot has achieved what many thought impossible, earning the title grandmaster at the age of 14 years and two months, breaking the records set by Bobby Fischer, Judit Polgar and Peter Leko.

based on e4. Black, though, now misses the point of his own operations. In striving for an exchange of queens, which White can easily evade, Black renounces the main theme of his defence, which consists of counter-attack against the white pawn on e3. Hence, 16... Bb7 followed by ... Na4 is the correct plan.

16... Qa4 17 Qb2 Qc5  
18 e4 Bb6 19 Re3 Na4  
20 Qc1 b5 21 Qe1 Nb5  
22 Qc4

White's pieces gather menacingly around the black king.

22... Nd7 23 g4 b4  
24 e5 bxc3 25 Qh6

Threatening 26 Bf6 with a forced mate. 25... Kxh8.



White: Bacrot, Black: Anic  
Enghien, March 1997  
Semi-Slav Defence

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 e6  
3 Nf3 d5 4 Nc3 Bb4  
5 Bg5 Nbd7 6 e3 c5

One of Black's less solid defences to the Queen's Gambit. The idea is to obtain a menacing queenside pawn majority which could prove deadly against a white player who is not up with the theory or fails to react with sufficient vigour.

7 exd5 exd5 8 Qc2 Qa4  
9 Bxd5 0-0 10 Q-0 Qc5

Although this relieves the tension in the centre, Black now easily achieves his dangerous phalanx of queenside pawns. In the future an advance based on ... b5-b4 may give Black an automatic strategic victory.

11 Bf5 Re8 12 Nd2 g6  
13 Bxd7

It seems strange to give up the light squares in this fashion whilst also ceding Black the advantage of the bishop pair. 13 Bf3 is certainly possible, but White's choice has the advantage of retarding Black's development, since he must now recapture with the knight.

13... Nxd7 14 Rael. White is clearly missing for a counter-break in the centre.

14... Bxc3. In his turn, Black gives up a bishop, but hopes to create a weakness on c3.

15 Bxc3 Nb6 16 f3. White is ready with his strategy, a central advance

26 Ne4. A brilliant reinforcement of his attack. If now 26... dxc4 27 fxe4, White, thanks to his ingenious 23rd move, has gained the threat of Rh3. Thereafter, the attempt to defend by 27... Re8 fails to 28 Qxh7+ Kxh7 29 Rh3+ Kg7 30 Bf6+ Kh7 31 Bf8 checkmate, a variation worthy of the young Kasparov.

26... f5 27 exf6 Rg8  
28 Nxc3 Rxf8

The only way to disturb White's attack was 28... Qb6, with the threat to capture on d4. Even then, after the simple 29 Kh1, to be followed by Rf1, it is difficult to believe that Black could survive 29 Qb4 Qb6. Too late, since White can now finish with a flourish. 30 Rxe6 Qxe6 31 Re1 Rxf6. If he moves the queen, 32 Re7 is crushing.

32 Rxe6 Rxf6 33 Nxd5 Rf8  
34 Bf4

Black resigns.

## WINNING MOVE

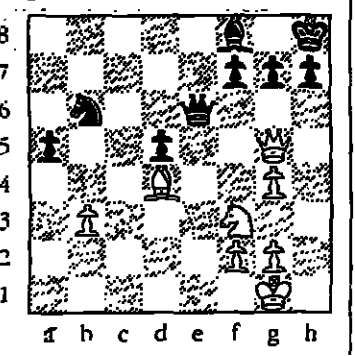
By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Tischbirek - Degelmann, Bad Worishofen 1997. White has pressure against the g7-square and the black rank is also vulnerable. How did White combine these factors to force a quick win?

Send your answer on a postcard to *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society, which includes a free invitation to the annual dinner at Simpson's-in-the-Strand. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1 Qxh7+

Last week's winner: R C Wignmore, Sheffield.



## No 1066

- ACROSS
- Clute: protected mammal (3)
  - Road to house: compel (5)
  - One without illusions (7)
  - One without credulity (7)
  - Wood-shaping machine (5)
  - Grass-cutter (6)
  - Breathe painfully; bright idea (6)
  - Esoteric (6)
  - Rival of classical Athens (6)
  - Manfred, Don Juan poet (5)
  - Contented (7)
  - Spouse's child, not one's own (7)
  - Callus: feature of Saturn (5)
  - Element Sn (3)
- DOWN
- Probability (4)
  - Best clothes (6)
  - Disposition; warped (4)
  - Stretch of land (5)
  - High-masted vessel (4,4)
  - Not much (6)
  - And so on (2,6)
  - Looking down on 'inferiors' (8)
  - Sanctity (8)
  - Membrane over eye (6)
  - Getting up: revolt (6)
  - Exhausted (5)
  - Make (money) (4)
  - Sleep rough (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1065  
ACROSS: 1 Avid 3 Farical 9 Cast 10 Trawler 11 Ammeter  
12 Tool 14 Stupid 16 Allure 18 List 19 Unheard 22 Anagram  
23 Hail 24 Gloaming 25 Smug  
DOWN: 1 Archaelm 2 Incomunicado 4 Artery 5 Chancel  
6 Colloquialism 7 Lore 8 Sill 13 Peddling 15 Interim 17 Gun-  
man 20 Ha-hu 21 Gang

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How the Big Cat got its claws into quality  
Page 2

# CAR 97

The best ways to take your bicycle by car  
Page 5



SATURDAY APRIL 12 1997

## Boxing promoter Frank Warren has a new heavyweight. Helen Mound reports



DES JENSON

Frank Warren and his Hummer: "I was hitting the door mirrors on every parked car I passed and leaving a trail of broken glass behind me"

## The American champ Don King gave away

Introducing Frank Warren's latest recruit, Hummer, 6ft tall, 7ft wide and weighing in at three-and-a-half tonnes. A heavyweight the like of which Britain has never seen. The boxing promoter is used to keeping company with large, powerful characters such as Frank Bruno or Mike Tyson, but despite the name and impressive credentials, Hummer is a new addition to Warren's garage, not his team of professional boxers.

Designed as an "unstoppable military vehicle" for the American army, it's taken a while for Warren to learn how to handle the Hummer on British roads. He thought he'd discovered a technical problem the first time he drove it in London. "I said to my passengers 'What's that clicking noise?' and they fell about because I was hitting the door mirrors on every parked car I passed and leaving a trail of broken glass behind me."

Not that Warren is unused to big cars — he's come a long way since he bought a Mini as his first — but the luxury military vehicle must look at odds alongside his Bentley, Aston Martin and Austin Healey.

Don King, the extraordinary-haired US boxing promoter, noticed the trend for military vehicles among the rich and famous last year and decided to indulge himself. Dining in New York with Warren, the subject of Hummers came up.

"I'm ordering five," declared King. "What's a Hummer?" asked Warren.

"It's a giant four-wheel drive. You should have one, you'll love it," replied King. And before Warren could say "High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle" (its full military name), King had made a call on his mobile phone to the local dealer and a sixth \$75,000 (£46,800) Hummer was ordered.

"I had no idea what it was until it arrived in the UK four months ago," laughs Warren, clearly delighted with his present from King. He's had the seats trimmed with cream leather (the Americans have a nasty fashion for crushed velvet), fitted it with a powerful stereo and a new security system and ordered chrome wheels and an additional seat. He'd like a sunroof, but cutting into the bullet-proof bodywork would be a tough job.

The Hummer is technically the same as those used in war zones: permanent four-wheel drive, self-inflating and deflating tyres, bulletproof bodywork and glass and bombproof underbody. And yes, Warren does wish he'd had one five years ago in Barking when he was shot and spent weeks in intensive care.

The total cost of Warren's Hummer is probably close to £100,000 including the type-approval changes (new lights and indicators), import duties and shipping expenses and the optional

extras fitted in the UK. But that's nothing compared with what the annual fuel bills will be. Warren drives this 5.7-litre V8 petrol model every day; it can cruise at up to 90mph, but at best it can achieve only 12mpg; use a lot of throttle and it drops to 7mpg. Filling the 23-gallon tank and 17-gallon reserve costs around £120.

Finding someone to service the Hummer is going to be a challenge for Warren, although there are US army bases in East Anglia that work on the military versions. But a local agricultural engineering firm that normally services tractors has carried out the first oil change.

It comes as no surprise to learn that it's power that delights Britain's leading boxing promoter. "Big engines, love 'em," he grins broadly when he talks about the Hummer's performance. Shifting to 30mph in five seconds feels knockout, although getting to 60mph in nearly 20 seconds is a little lethargic. But, despite its size and wide track, it has a tight turning circle and is surprisingly nimble thanks in part to its very low centre of gravity. The only drawback is the hyper-light power steering that provides absolutely no feel. But it's not a problem, as the likelihood of any driver chucking three-

and-a-half tonnes of armour-plated titanium through winding roads is pretty slim.

The American army carries out Arctic and desert operations in raucous 6.5-litre turbodiesel Hummers that sound like something out of *Mad Max*. The civilian petrol version has a more familiar V8 growl that announces Warren's arrival as effectively as a team of Rottweilers snapping at your ankles.

Residents of Hertford, where Warren has his offices, have begun to get used to the daily appearance of this monster, but every so often he notices with satisfaction the dropped jaws and amazed stares. "People definitely keep out of its way," he says proudly.

The Warren family currently enjoy total exclusivity in owning the only luxury civilian Hummer in Britain, but that isn't likely to last for long. "Prince Naseem has been on at me to help get him one, and I know Eubank is also keen," admits Warren. Chris Eubank is likely to take delivery of a new Hummer any day — he was recently spotted buying one in Dubai by an ITV film crew.

Despite the exclusivity, Susan Warren isn't as keen on the Hummer as her husband. "The kids love it, but my wife hates it. She doesn't like it being parked in the drive."

But as the new owner of Hunsdon Hall in Hertfordshire, what better way for him to tour his estate than in a big black shiny Hummer?

### A MILITARY HISTORY

## Film star from the battlefield

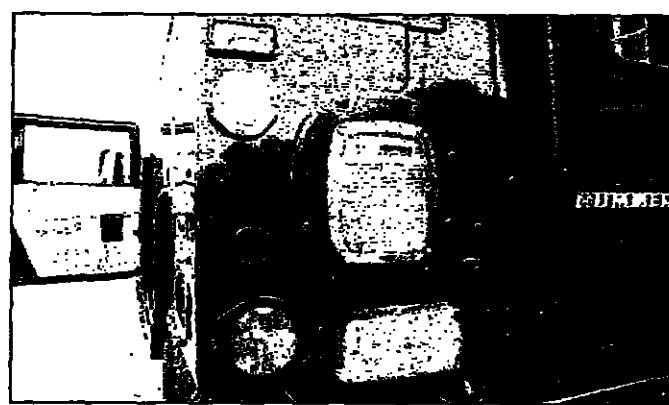
THE HISTORY of the Hummer began in 1979 when the American army put a contract out to develop a "High Mobility Multi-Purpose Wheeled Vehicle". After five months of testing, the AM General HMMWV (also known as Humvee) was judged the superior machine and 55,000 were ordered. Although power isn't a major feature in the Hummers — 190bhp from the 6.5-litre turbodiesel and 5.7-litre petrol — massive torque makes them impressive. The petrol stamps out 300 lb ft at 2,400 revs, the turbodiesel an extraordinary 430 lb ft at just 1,700 revs.

DURING the Gulf war, the Humvee gained fame for its strength and durability. However, several commanding officers were reported as favouring the luxurious Range Rovers, which is possibly why the armoured-plated civilian Hummer was launched in 1991, with electric windows, air-conditioning and CD players.

THERE are six civilian models — two-door, four-door and soft-top versions, petrol or turbodiesel — sold through 50 dealers in America and 20 overseas distributors. It was an instant hit with US trendsetters and Hollywood boosted its image in movies such as *Last Action Hero*, *Broken Arrow* and, more recently, *The Fan* and *Dante's Peak*. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Mike Tyson were among the first customers.



Humvees on the road to Kuwait City during the Gulf war



### HUMMER

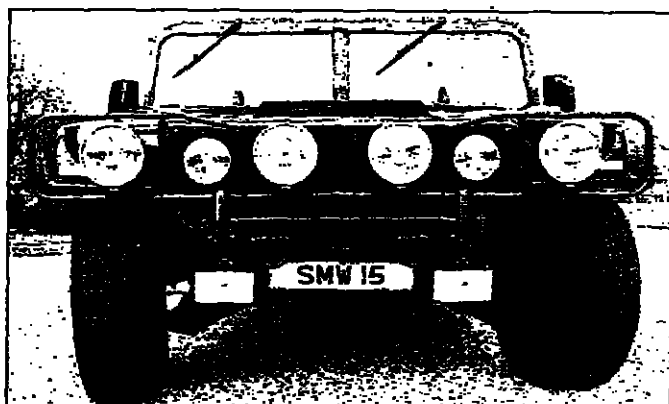
Engine:  
Hummer 5.7-litre V8, 190 bhp; 300 lb ft at 2400rpm.  
Range Rover 4.6-litre V8, 225 bhp; 277 lb ft at 3000rpm.

Performance:  
0-30mph 5.4 seconds; 0-60mph 19.6 seconds (10.1 seconds). Top speed, 93mph (118mph).

Economy:  
Seven to 12 miles per gallon (12-30mpg).

Dimensions:  
Height 75ins (72ins); width 106.5in (86ins); length 184.5ins (184ins); weight 3.5 tonnes (2.2 tonnes); ground clearance 16ins (14ins).

Price: £31,250-£56,250 (£47,765).



Making things hum: the bulletproof, bomb-proof giant

# THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE DOWNRIGHT UNPLEASANT

They're all in the J.D. Power report on car satisfaction in this month's *Top Gear* magazine





2

## CAR 97

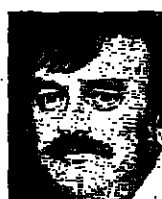
'Slippery when wet' — I offer thanks to the scientists who have worked that out, but I think there's a case for the more upbeat 'Not slippery when dry'

## Dubious signs of intelligent life

You will not spend many hours on the roads of America before highways start to resemble giant exhibitions staged by advertising companies. Indeed the surest way to recognise that a town is looting is to measure the gaps between hoardings: the closer together, the nearer the town.

In Britain this kind of thing is frowned upon, and planning regulations are fairly strict. But in recent years there has been a trend towards unofficial signs, placed at the side of the road by individuals announcing everything from "Good Food 200 yards" to "Happy 40th Ron". At worst, this is irritating and tacky, but does not seriously impinge on the landscape. But, contrary to the bold words of politicians who extol personal responsibility, Britain re-

### DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

mains a nanny state in which increasing numbers of official signs clutter the roadside.

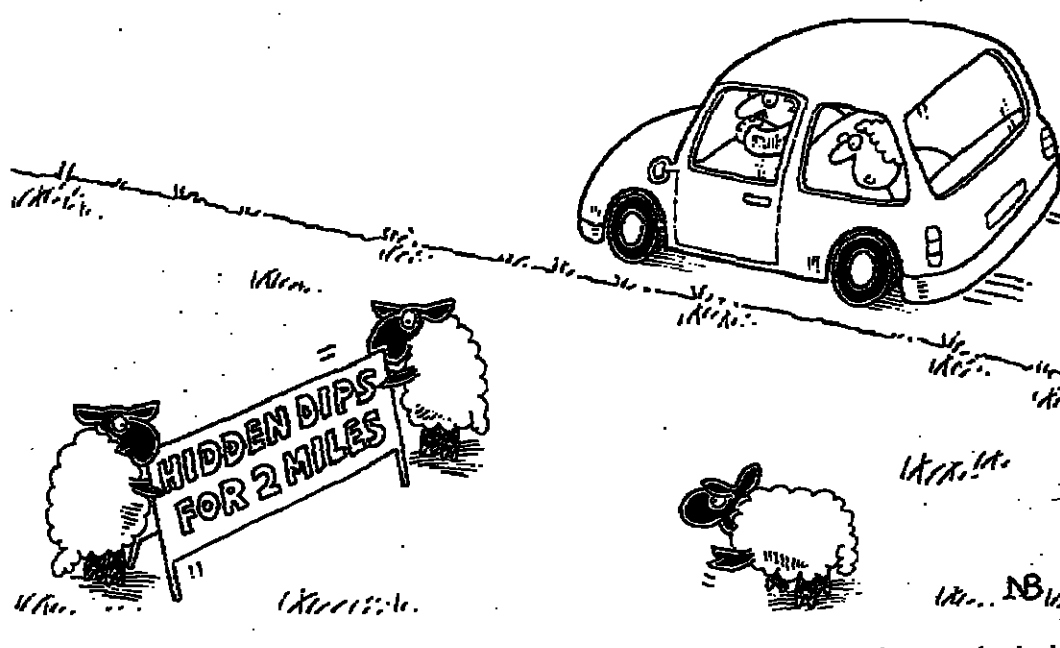
They are often mutually exclusive in terms of road safety. On the one hand they try to warn of hazards, yet on the other the sheer number become a hazard in

themselves. But some safety signs are of dubious value and constitute an insult to the intelligence.

Last week on an A road in Somerset I passed a sign that said "Hidden dips for two miles", followed later by the inevitable "End of hidden dips". The dips did not seem hidden to me, but I suppose it could be argued that an overtaking manoeuvre might suddenly be compromised by an oncoming vehicle appearing out of a dip. Pretty marginal, though.

My favourite safety sign consists of three words: "Slippery when wet". Each time I offer a word of thanks to the scientists who have worked out that surfaces become slippery when they are wet, although I do think there is a case for the more positive and upbeat: "Not slippery when dry".

Have you noticed the sign for



elderly people? It consists of a black outline showing two bent over human figures, one of whom is using a walking stick. I think it unlikely that anyone could conclude there must be a water diver ahead; it obviously concerns aged folk. But it still bears the words "Elderly people" below the symbol just in case.

Such signs assume no ability to think on the part of drivers and take safety measures to absurd lengths. But there is another cluster which actually work against road safety: the signs directing us to places of interest, such as National Trust properties.

Some are useful. They work best if each sign contains one place of

interest and, because the background is brown, they cannot be confused with road directions. However, there are now quite busy road junctions in some places where a single, huge brown sign contains information about four or five venues. This is too much.

I may want to know the way to the Victorian Steam Kettle Muse-

um, the 18th-century Belt-Driven Tractor Exhibition, the Home for Distressed Barn Owls or the Charles Dickens Working Chimney Sweep Expo, but I do not think I want all this information at a roundabout which also contains road signs to eight places at every point of the compass.

Roundabouts are inherently dangerous because attitudes to them vary. Some drivers have either never heard of the rule about giving way to traffic on one's right or simply ignore it, therefore there is a good chance of hitting someone. Magistrates are not famously lenient if you claim to have been absorbed in deciding whether the Jacobean Leather Truss Museum required the second or third exit.

The problem is likely to get worse before it gets better. Heritage is big business and competition in the industry is intense. But so is competition among supermarkets, and if we allow this signing on a basis of need, Sainsbury and Tesco will demand equal treatment.

There is a simple solution. Tourist maps contain places of interest, so half the brown signs along our roads could be torn down, thus encouraging people to re-acquire the art of map reading.

## Danger peer ahead

Eve-Ann Prentice on the car story

THE Marquess of Queensberry carried a loaded revolver ready to shoot at them. Rudyard Kipling thought they were "civilising agents", and Victoria was not amused by the "horrible machines". They were talking at the turn of the century about the motor car.

Now, love it or loath it, few could argue that the car has become the icon of this century. More than 70 per cent of adults have come to rely on the internal combustion engine, according to an RAC survey released yesterday.

CARS and their drivers have been vilified from the word go, with pioneers in the 1890s branded "Carbarians". Trafalgar Square billboards denouncing motor travel, and cars described as "evil smelling" and "petrol-piddling monsters".

Passions for and against the car are included in *The Motoring Century*, a history of the RAC published yesterday as part of the organisation's centenary celebrations. The Marquess of Queensberry, better-known for bringing "gentlemanly" rules to pugilism, is revealed as an early road-rager who declared that he intended to carry a loaded revolver for the "purpose of shooting dangerous drivers".

WRITTEN by Piers Brendon. Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, the book also contains some of the more outlandish moves to curb petrol-driven driving excesses 100 years ago. These included a wire which was stretched across the Slough-to-Maidenhead road in an apparent attempt to decapitate drivers, and the farmers who suggested that bombs be fitted to vehicles so that over-enthusiastic acceleration would trigger an explosion.

None the less, the car did relieve one big pollution headache for the late Victorians. At the end of the 1900s, each of Britain's three million horses, most of them in urban areas, littered the roads with between three and four tons of dung a year.



Jaguar's Coventry production line: "You give the guys ways of examining themselves against the customers' view. Then they've got a real incentive"

Cars are getting better but are not improving as fast as motorists' expectations and even good makers can be let down by poor dealers. Those are the broad conclusions to be drawn from this year's J.D. Power survey of customer satisfaction, regarded as the best indicator of its kind in the British market.

But when it comes to individual makers, Britain's biggest car firms — Ford, Vauxhall and Rover — take a hammering, with Asian marques dominating the table for quality and reliability. There is one exception: Jaguar, which only a few years ago was almost a joke when it came to quality and reliability, made the top 10 for the first time and won a special award for being the most improved marque. The customer care offered by its dealers is said to be the best in the industry.

The maker with the happiest customers overall was Subaru, the Japanese four-wheel-drive specialist, whose cars powered Colin McRae to the world rally championship. Honda, which has never been out of the top three since the survey started four years ago, tied for second place with the Korean maker Kia, while another Korean newcomer, Daewoo, was fourth and Skoda, now a thriving part of the Volkswagen empire, was fifth.

## Jaguar joins top Asian cats

Alan Copps on how the once languishing UK carmaker has leapt up the league table for quality and reliability

When the list was broken down to individual models, Toyota's Corolla and Celica were the top two. Jaguar tied for eighth place with Nissan, just ahead of arch-rival BMW. So what is it that has helped Jaguar, owned by Ford, to compete with these stars of the automotive firmament when even the best products of its parent company and Vauxhall and Rover are scrambling around the foot of the table with Lada and Alfa Romeo?

Nick Scheele, Jaguar's chairman and chief executive, exuded delight at his award. "In the United States, where we sell 50 per cent of our cars, we targeted the J.D. Power survey as a benchmark for our progress. Because it runs over two years of ownership, it takes into account quality, reliability and service. You

RATINGS	
GOOD	POOR
Subaru	Citroën
Honda	Renault
Kia	Peugeot
Daewoo	Land Rover
Skoda	Fiat
Mazda	Rover
Toyota	Vauxhall
Jaguar	Ford
Nissan	Alfa Romeo
BMW	Lada

won't find a worker on the Jaguar production line who doesn't know where we stand in these rankings. We knew we had to improve and this was the best measure we could find. Our dealers have always been enthusiasts. Frankly, in the dark days I think we owed

our survival to them, but now we are giving them the products they deserve."

Mike Beasley, director of manufacturing operations in Coventry, says getting that kind of quality takes more than simply introducing Japanese working methods. "We introduced radical changes with the unions which brought team-working to the shop floor. It's a question of combining the Japanese mindset with British ingenuity. You have to give the guys on the production line ways of examining themselves against the customers' view. Then they've got a real incentive to improve."

But the other key element has been skill. Unlike large volume manufacturers who can now rely on robots to keep rigid quality control, Jaguar with its wide range of tailor-

made models and comparatively low volumes, still relies heavily on manpower. "You need skill and rigid discipline. That's how we got the launch of the XK 8 right first time," says Beasley.

The Jaguar award coincided with excellent news on the sales front with that outstanding new sports car helping the company achieve first quarter sales of 10,931, the best since 1990. So will Ford be trying to learn from Jaguar's improvement? Scheele, who although now an American citizen was born in Brentwood where Ford has its British headquarters, suggests not: "Let's just say we work independently of our parent company."

The Power survey is done in Britain with the help of *Top Gear* magazine and relies on the detailed experiences of 16,498 motorists who ran 87 models from 33 makers over two years. It is the large sample size and long-term information that has made it the most authoritative record of motoring experience.

For Subaru, the achievement of topping the satisfaction index is tempered, Ed Swatman, managing director, was delighted with his award but fears his chances to capitalise on it will be limited by further European Union quotas on imported Japanese cars.

### Dawn of revival for a 96-year-old legend

Hopes for a fully fledged revival of the AC name of AC cars were boosted this week when the new owners of the marque appointed their first dealership. Eve-Ann Prentice writes.

AC — one of Britain's oldest surviving makers, dating back to 1901 — was bought from receivers by Alan Lubinsky in December last year. Now Portfield Sports and Classics in Rochester, West Sussex have been given the pioneer dealership.

Portfield director Mike Ayling says: "Before the speed

## A new sales deal for the AC sports

restriction was imposed on motorways in the 1960s, a Cobra was clocked doing 196mph... they really are fantastic cars. I am absolutely thrilled by the prospect of selling them and it is wonderful the company has been resurrected."

Portfield, which already deals in TVR, Aston Martin, Lagonda and Morgans, hopes to sell at least 12 Cobra MKIVs a year — at around £70,000 each — and are plans to sell the latest version of the AC Ace towards the end of the year. The Cobra MKIV is custom-built in Weybridge, Surrey, based on the famous design perfected by Texan racing driver Carroll Shelby.

Portfield describes its latest Ford V8 engine as "brutally fast".

The name AC is an abbreviation of Autocarrier, a 1907 model launched by the company's founders, John Weller and John Portwine, who set up their engineering workshop in South London in 1901.

In 1963, the Cobra's 196mph adventure on the M1 led to questions in Parliament. Two years later, it won the Sports Car World Championship. Controlling interest in AC cars was sold to Autokraft and Ford in 1986 and in 1992 Brian Anglist acquired Ford's interests. But four years later, the company was put in the hands of receivers and devotees were beginning to fear the worst when Lubinsky's Pride Automotive Group set up the AC Car Group to step in and save the marque.

Lubinsky says: "We are in full production of the Cobra right now and are working to maintain and increase the AC presence in the buoyant market for high performance cars."

For more information call Portfield Sports and Classics on 01243 528500.

### AA GRIDLOCK GUIDE

● **LONDON**  
A406 Upper Edmonstone. Major roadworks on Angel Road (North Circular Road) over the Lea Valley viaduct. A306 Hammersmith Bridge. Closed both ways to general traffic for structural works. Expect congestion on both sides of the river. A2400 Bloomsbury. Resurfacing work on Upper Woburn Place and east side of Tavistock Square. M4 Chiswick area. Various weekend and overnight closures for work on elevated section between the junction 2 on and off slip roads, also closures both ways on the A4. M1 Hendon area. Major road works at Five Ways Corner, with no access to or from the A1 Great North Way.

● **SOUTH-EAST**  
M40 Buckinghamshire. Long-term roadworks with contraflow between junctions 1a (M25) and 3 (Wymondsbury). A130 Sandon, Essex. Roadworks at Southend Road at the Gingerbread Hall Bridge, with width restrictions. M27 Hampshire. Major roadworks with contraflow between junctions 8 and 10. A31 Ringwood, Hampshire. Major roadworks with contraflow. Long delays at times.

A41 Hertfordshire. Lane closures eastbound on North Western Avenue from Hutton Bridge roundabout to Leavesden Green Interchange. M25 Surrey. Restrictions and lane closures both ways between Reigate and A3. ● **SOUTH-WEST**  
M5 Bristol. Contraflow across Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph limit. A39 Cornwall. Construction work with temporary lights at times between Trispen and Carland Cross roundabout.

M5 Gloucestershire. Major roadworks with only one lane open at the roundabout junction 13 with the A419. Expect long peak-time delays. A417 Barnwood bypass, Gloucestershire. Contraflow between the Zoons Court and the A46 roundabouts. Long rush hour delays. A37 near Shepton Mallet, Somerset. Temporary lights at Wrayall Hill.

● **MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA**  
A1 Alconbury, Cambridgeshire. Reduced to one lane northbound. A6 Lockington, Leicestershire. Temporary lights between the M1 J24 and Sawley Island. A500 Stoke area, Staffordshire. Contraflow with only one lane open each way between Talke (A34) and Longport (A527 Porthill). A5 west of M1, Staffs. Roadworks between A449 at Galesley and M6, J12.

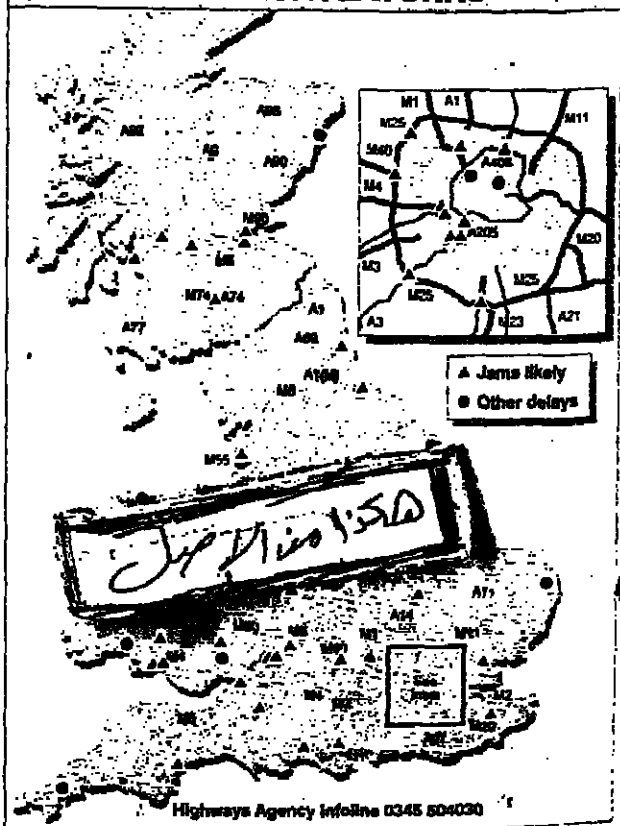
● **NORTH**  
A62 Hollinwood, Greater Manchester. Manchester Road reduced to one lane northbound for roadworks. Major delays expected in evening rush hour. A585 near M55, Lancashire. Roadworks on Fleetwood Road, between Westham Circle and Hellfire Corner, near M55 junction. Diversions in force. M53 Merseyside. Bridge maintenance work at junction 2 (Birkenhead) with only one lane open each way on the Moreton Spur. Peak-time congestion. A19 Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire. Major roadworks between Thornaby-on-Tees and the North Tees Industrial Estate, with 50mph limit. Lane closures every weekend and overnight.

A1058 Newcastle. Lane closures on Cradlewell bypass at Cornerhouse junction. A61 Tankersley, South Yorkshire. Contraflow in place near the M1 junction. M1 West Yorkshire. Major roadworks continue around the Leeds junction with lane closures and speed restrictions. Expect delays on the M1, M621, and Dewsbury Road. M1 West Yorkshire. Narrow lanes both ways for works at the M52 interchange with 50mph limit.

● **WALES**  
A48 Carmarthen. Temporary lights and lane restrictions on Pansarn roundabout (A484). A44 between Llangurig and Eisteddfod Gŵyl. Powys. Temporary lights for roadworks near Glasnevin Arms. Possible delays. A483 Fabian Way, Swansea. Lane closures both ways near the dock entrance on main dock carriageway into Swansea from the M4.

● **SCOTLAND**  
Aberdeen Queen Elizabeth Bridge closed Southbound for roadworks. Diversions via Victoria Bridge and Menzies Road. A74 Dumfries and Galloway. Contraflow between Beattock and the Harthop viaduct. Expect serious delays. M8 Edinburgh. Major roadworks, with lane closures on roundabout at junction 2 (Newbridge Spur, M9). Delays on all approaches (M8, M9, A8 and A98). A8 Port Glasgow, Inverclyde. Roadworks with lane closures at the Newark roundabout. A78 Wemyss Bay, North Ayrshire. Temporary lights on Greenock road affecting traffic between Largs and Greenock. Expect delays. M8 Renfrewshire. Closed eastbound at junction 30 (Eskine Spur) for bridge repairs. Contraflow on westbound carriageway.

### MAJOR ROADWORKS



Highways Agency hotline 0345 504020

**OFFER**

READERS of *Car 97* can win a copy of *The Motoring Century*. Send a postcard, to arrive by next Saturday, with your name and address to RAC Centenary Book, RAC, 14 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5BL. The first five picked will each receive a copy.

### AUTOFAX by Lea Evans and David Long

TRAVELLING IN THE HULL OF THE ILL-FATED ANDREA DORIA, GIBBS' CHRYSLER NOBBIEMAN CONCEPT CAR WAS LOST AT SEA IN JULY 1956...

BRITAIN IS THE WORLD'S FIFTH-BIGGEST MARKET FOR NEW CARS.

LAND-RIVERS ARE BUILT IN ZIMBABWE, TURKEY, SOUTH AFRICA, MOROCCO, MALAYSIA, KENYA AND AUSTRALIA AS WELL AS IN SOUTH AFRICA...

SIR MALCOLM CAMPBELL'S BLUEBIRD WAS NAMED AFTER A SOGGY-PAID BY HIS FRIEND THE NOBEL LAUREATE MALCOLM MURIELL...



# Sweden offers the full Monte

Saab's 900 convertible now comes in yellow. Why? And is it really motoring's equivalent of a dozen oysters? Ian Morton investigates

I have taken three decades as a motoring scribe, but at last I have done it. I have crossed Europe to road test a new colour. Yellow. Monte Carlo Yellow, no less, and it was absolutely essential to go to Monte Carlo to sample it. And yes, it drives well.

This is the latest hue — the 12th in fact — to become available on the Saab 900 convertible, and in case you suppose the Swedes have gone potty or become desperate, understand that the 900 convertible is a very important model indeed: that June 10 sees the company's 50th birthday and this is by way of being a celebratory version.

The first production Saab convertible, the 900 of 1984, started life as no more than an illustration from the 900 saloon brochure with the superstructure snipped off with scissors by one of the firm's designers. Arilbert Valenbroder: this clumsy concept was pinned to his studio wall for a year before a visitor, Saab US marketing executive Robert J Sinclair, spotted it and urged the company to pursue the idea.

Since the current second-generation 900 convertible was designed in parallel with the 900 saloon rather than as an afterthought, its structural integrity is absolute: in some types of crashes, convertible occupants are said to be safer than those in the saloon.

Saab crash test procedures, meanwhile, uniquely include collisions with a dummy moose, because incidents involving large animals account for more than a quarter of all Scandinavian road accidents.

The complex roof mechanisms and motors of the current 900 convertibles are enclosed within the tonneau roof: this is referred to in the firm as "the 27-second job" because that is the time the roof takes to open or close and "we do a lot of things you won't notice, but if we didn't, you would".

Saab makes and sells a bigger ratio of convertibles to saloons than any other car maker anywhere: in the UK one Saab registration in four is of a drophead, and Britain takes 16.2 per cent of all the convertibles the company produces. North America takes 47.6 per cent, Italy is third with 37.7 per cent. In all, more than 50 countries import it.

Though something of an

## SAAB 900

Engines: 2.5 V6 producing 170bhp at 5,900rpm; 2.0 turbo-charged four-cylinder producing 185bhp at 5,500rpm.

Performance: 2.5 V6 0-60mph in 9.2 secs, max 140mph; 2.0 turbo 0-60 in 8.6, max 144mph.

Economy: EU combined, 2.5 V6 auto 25.9mpg; 2.0 turbo 27.2 manual, 25 auto

Equipment: ABS brakes, power hood, climate control, driver's airbag, reach-adjustable steering wheel, leather trim, electric windows and door mirrors, headlamp and interior light fade delay.

Prices: 2.5 V6 £30,295; 2.0 turbo £29,895.

oddball carmaker, Saab can claim to have pioneered more innovations than any other manufacturer, including series-production turbo-charging, headlamp wash/wipe, heated seats, impact-absorbing bumpers, pollen filters, asbestos-free brakes and manual transmission without a clutch pedal.

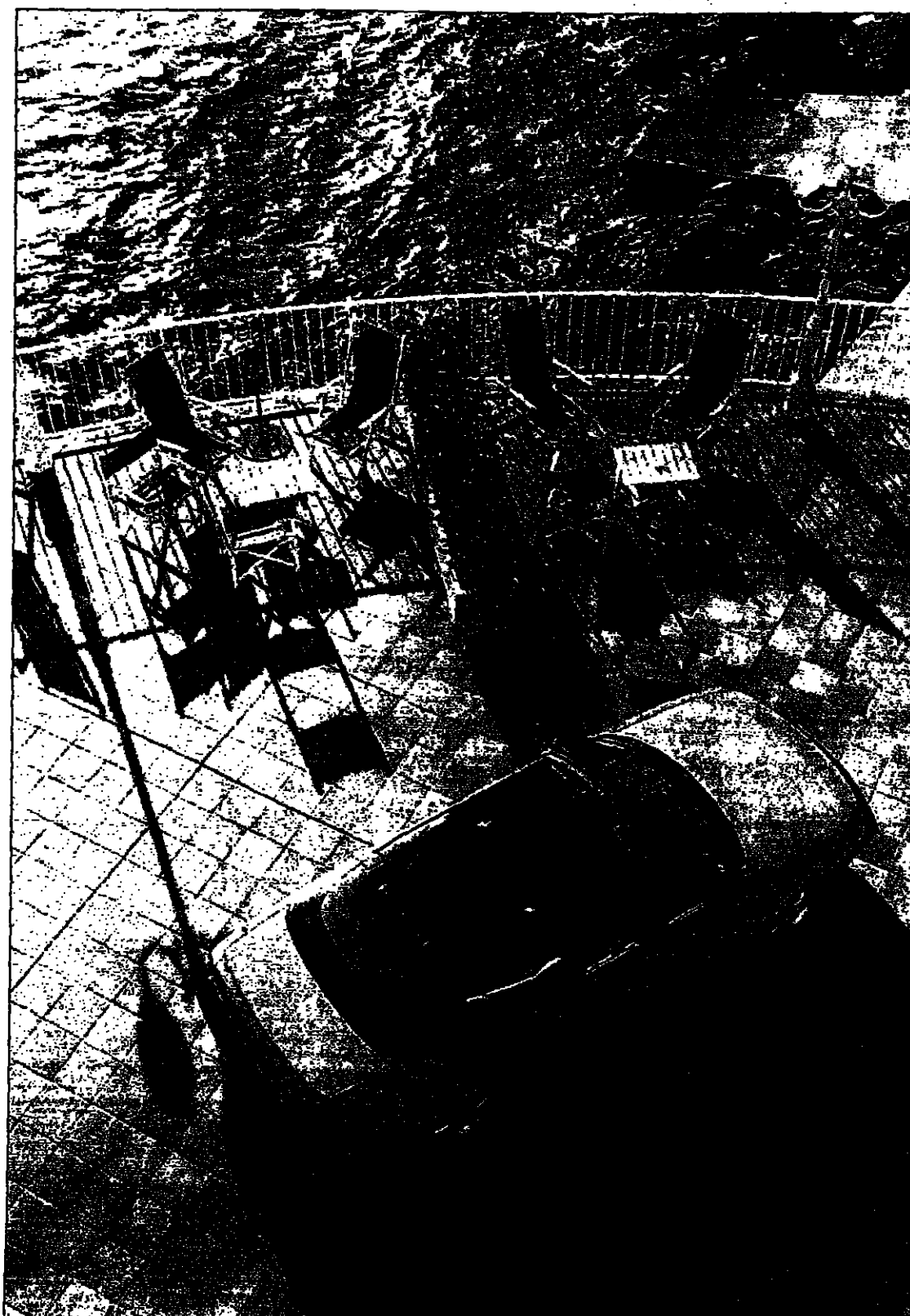
Saab soared to prominence with a series of giant-killing victories in the Monte Carlo Rally in the days when the event meant something to most people. The Principality is currently preparing for the Grand Prix and is also marking the 700th anniversary of the Grimaldi dynasty.

But back to the yellow. What profound philosophy, what brooding northern sentiment, might lie behind the choice? None, they said. They just needed a colour they were not already offering, and yellow was it and it's trendy anyway, and should attract women customers, who are important.

Women already buy half the 900 convertibles sold in the US, the car's biggest market. And doesn't yellow suit the 900 convertibles, they said. Indeed it does, bringing out the shape and projecting a very positive presence. Naturally I warmed to the push and

powerful version at £30,295. Buttercup paintwork, fragrant black leather, deep burr woodwork, chunky controls and tactile switchgear, solidly supplied, lots of controlled oomph from 2.5 litres of V6 engine working through an automatic transmission lined with satin.

It was a lazy run through the manicured wealth and clean streets of Monaco, a long



A place in the sun: yellow wasn't on Saab's colour list, it's trendy and should attract women customers

swishing haul up the winding roads above and beyond the sun beating down on perfumed hillsides all around... well, somebody had to help them with their celebration.

The successful convertible — worldwide sales of this second-generation model have more than doubled to 14,200 since its launch in 1994 — is not just good news for Saab. It is assembled in Finland at a

place called Uusikaupunki — go on, say it, it throbs — and a fifth of the components by value comes from British suppliers. In the top car the proportion is higher still because the hide is Scottish and the engine originates in Vauxhall's plant in Cheshire.

Some people consider the 900 convertible rather sexy. More so in yellow? The car wearing the full Monte is being

portrayed on UK advertising hoardings as "The motoring equivalent of a dozen oysters", or some such nonsense.

Can it be coincidence that more women are employed in the Saab design centre than in any other similar undertaking in the motor industry? Currently half the staff there are women, but the figure has been as high as 60 per cent.

Saab arguing that the female

touch means less aggressive styling and greater sensuality in the design.

I asked my hosts if they approved of the oyster implications, and they seemed doubtful. The 900 convertible is a spacious four-seater, but not many Swedes are being conceived in it, they thought.

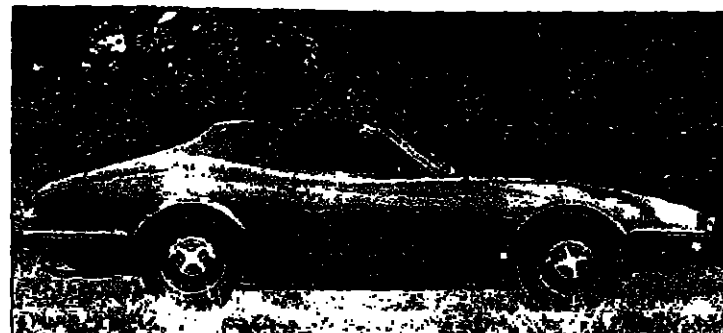
For one thing, only 0.3 per cent of production sells in Sweden even though the multi-layer

power hood is designed to exclude the Arctic winter and you could roast a reindeer in the heating system.

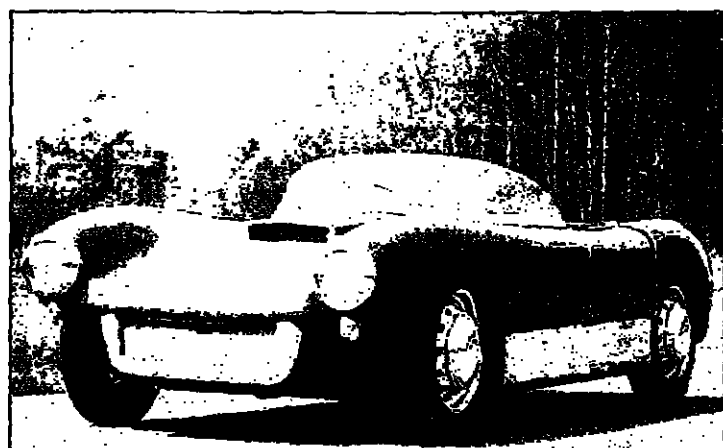
For another, they said, their country is "too cold for that sort of thing". Perhaps it was different in Britain, they wondered. Perhaps, I conceded. As for me, thanks to an unfortunate encounter in Spain some years ago, one whiff of an oyster and I am very ill indeed.

## SAAB: A HISTORY

### Taking off with a team of non-drivers



The 1965 Sonett prototype "Catherina", a project that failed to mature



Six 1956 Sonetts were built, but rule changes meant they never raced

SAAB — Svenska Aeroplan Aktiebolaget — went into motor-making as a diversification from aircraft manufacture, telling a team of 20 of its aero-engineers to design a car: half of them did not even hold a driving licence.

Their effort, the Saab 92, unveiled in 1947, used an engine based on a two-cylinder two-stroke unit from German car-maker DKW. The only vestigial evidence of DKW today is that it is represented by one of the rings in the Audi badge.

Saab's first drophead, the Sonett, was conceived and designed as an unofficial project by one of the firm's test drivers, Björn Karlström: in 1956 they made six, intending to

race them, but the competition rules changed and the scheme foundered. A second attempt at a drophead was Sonett 2, known in the firm as "Catherina". A 1965 prototype was built, but also failed to mature.

The firm hit the headlines anyway when it entered rallying, scoring consecutive Monte Carlo wins in 1961, 1962 and 1963 courtesy of Erik Carlsson. This amiable giant married Stirling Moss's sister, Pat, lives in Berkshire, and still fronts major Saab public events.

All Saab cars have incorporated the figure 9 — and will always do so — in recognition of their plane-making heritage: the Saab 90 and 91 were civil aircraft.

## BMW gives a boost to hyperinflation

You can now be protected by 12 airbags — but the car might blow up, says Helen Mound

New cars could soon be equipped with a dozen airbags, claims BMW. And at the launch of its latest airbag innovation, a spokesman for the German carmaker admitted that if all the devices were to deploy at one time, the explosions would be sufficient to "probably break-up the car".

Launching its new headbag — an airbag designed to protect the driver and front passenger from severe head injuries in a side-on collision — BMW has brought the total of possible airbags in a luxury car to 12. Two front airbags, two rear-passenger airbags in the back of the front seats, four sidebags and now four headbags. It would feel like being trapped inside a bouncy castle if they all went off at once.

But the company insists that it is highly unlikely for every airbag to be activated in one go, because the sensors are intelligent enough to know which devices to activate and different types of collisions trigger different sensors. For example, it says, a head-on accident is unlikely to set off side airbags, and, depending on the force of the crash, front airbags may not go off in a side-on collision.

BMW's new tubular-shaped



BMW's headbag under test: it also offers protection from splinters if the window breaks

headbag is hidden in the roof, and when triggered extends diagonally across the front side window. Attached at the bottom of the car's A-pillar (near the dashboard) and the top of the B-pillar (near the grab handle), it follows the curved roofline. When the sensors ignite the device, the inflatable tubular structure (ITS for short) bursts out from the roof lining in milliseconds. The inflation causes it to shorten as it forms a straight

and rigid tube of padding across the window. And because it isn't folded away, like an ordinary airbag, it doesn't need such an aggressive explosion to inflate it.

BMW fitted side airbags as standard on its 5 and 7 Series last year, claiming a 50 per cent reduction in the risk of injury from side-on collisions. The company has been examining accidents involving its cars since 1976 and says side-on collisions account for 21 per

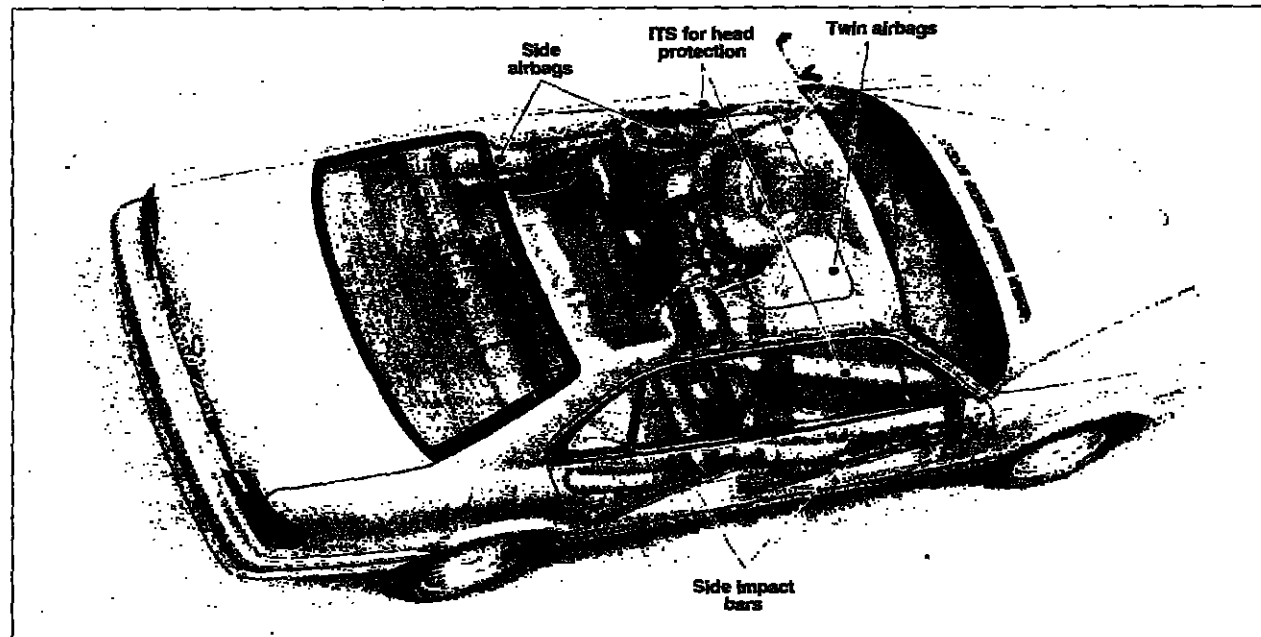
cent of all accidents, but are responsible for more than 30 per cent of all cases of injury. Having fitted side airbags to protect the chest, BMW used its accident research and computer simulation of car crashes to develop the headbag. The new airbag has several benefits: it helps reduce sharp movements of the head that cause injury to the neck; it protects occupants from objects hitting or entering the car from the side; its tough fabric

offers protection from glass splinters when the side window breaks; and its rigid structure stops the occupants from being thrown out of the car if it rolls over.

BMW says that 12 airbags is probably the maximum protection possible in a car and has no plans to fit its new headbag for rear passengers. The company says it only fits airbags where research shows a need, and as yet head injuries to rear passengers have been minimal.

BMW believes that the line the tubular airbag follows corresponds to the eye-level of occupants of virtually any size. A short driver who sits close to the steering wheel and a tall driver sitting further away would both benefit from the headbag. A spokesman did admit that, "for a smaller driver sitting far back it would be ineffective".

However a solution for different shaped drivers is on the way. BMW hopes to have intelligent airbags fitted in its cars within five years. Using electronics that can assess how tall and heavy the occupant is, their seating position, the car's



All-round protection from BMW: if they all went off at the same time, it would be like being trapped in a bouncy castle

acceleration and the type of accident, the intelligent system will be able to trigger the appropriate airbags with the required force to suit that particular situation.

It seems as if demand for airbags has got a little out of hand. In the same month that BMW has launched its headbags, and Volvo announced a device called airbag curtains, Toyota has been working on a "safety car" that features, among other ideas, a bonnet airbag to soften the blow to pedestrians.

Meanwhile the Scandinavian authorities — who were instrumental in making airbags commonplace in modern cars — have passed legislation to allow car dealers to disconnect passenger airbags if the customer requests it, because of fears of decapitation to children in the front.

Fitted as standard to 5 and 7 Series models from September, BMW's new headbag will add £200 to the price of the car. Customers wanting the device on the 3 Series will have to wait for the all-new models to be launched next year.

1953: the Beetle.

1959: the Mini.

1983: the 205.

1997: ?

Call 0800 178 278.







Jacqui Tait, the first woman to join the Conservative Whips' office, talks to Andrew Pierce

## 'I am sure that I entertained many sun worshippers'

Jacqui Tait made Parliamentary history last year when she became the first woman to join the all-male bastion of the Tory whips' office. Even Margaret Thatcher, as Prime Minister, only stepped into the portals with permission of the Chief Whip. But with a husband, two brothers and five nephews, she is used to dealing with members of the opposite sex. Currently defending a majority of 6,600 at Hastings & Rye, Mrs Tait has had plenty of experience with truculent men. She worked behind the bar at Strathclyde University and specialised in ejecting drunken customers.

How did you first learn to drive?

I had driving lessons for my 17th birthday from my mother. The driving school cars were Triumph Herald. It is a slur on car houses to say that they drove like them.

What was your first car?

A Mini Countryman, which had so much mileage that when I had it serviced, after a 6,000-mile trip to Portugal, I was told they never expected to see it again. I used it for years afterwards.

### STEERING COLUMN

What car do you drive now, and why?

A four-litre Jaguar saloon. My mother drove Jaguars, so I was used to them.

Do you like driving?

I love it. But I am a rotten passenger and cannot sit in the back reading maps. I have been driving automatics for years now, but often long for a nice manual gearbox to have fun with.

What is your most hated car?

Any boy racer, of any age, in any car who gets too pushy.

What is your dream car?

A new Jaguar, but still a saloon. I need something that is both fast and comfortable. When I'm travelling, I regard the car as my home. It has my office, clothes, bottles of water and serves as a dining room too. It is usually littered with sandwich packets and empty water bottles.

What is your worst habit in the car?

My husband informs me it is taking out a contact lens at one set of traffic lights, clearing it, popping it back in at the next set and so on. What he does not seem to grasp is that my eyes are not equally bad, so they adjust over short distances.

What infuriates you most about other drivers?

I don't mind other motorists. It is cycle couriers, who either sit in my blind spot or try to pass me on the inside after I have signalled I am turning left. Motorcycle couriers are not much better. Practically all the scratches and dents on the car are a result of couriers driving up the wrong side of the road towards me sneaking between cars in non-existent spaces.

What is the most unusual thing you have done in your car?

Changing into full evening rig in the car takes great skill. The last time I did a complete change was on the seafront in Porthcawl, on a blazing hot June Saturday after the Welsh Tory party conference. I am



Jacqui Tait: "When I'm travelling, I regard the car as my home. It has my office, clothes, bottles of water and serves as a dining room."

sure that I entertained many sun worshippers as I struggled to change decorously.

What do you listen to in the car?

Radio 4 for extended news, but mainly Classic FM. On long journeys, an opera cassette. I wish I had

a radio which would automatically change frequencies.

Have you ever had points on your licence?

The last time was in the 1960s. The first set was when I was driving with my brother out of Glasgow to

watch a rugby international at Murrayfield. The second was nine months later, that time for crossing a stop sign. Since then my licence has been clean.

If you were Secretary of State for Transport, what is the first thing you would do?

Bring the A32 and A259 up to modern standards without delay. It would also do much to strengthen our local economy.

What is your favourite car advertisement?

Pass.

## Saddle up and ride off with your wheels

Families are increasingly taking their bikes by car — but what's the best way? Hilary Stone looks at the cycle racks on the market

Bicycles are becoming more a lifestyle accessory, with the mountain bike in particular now an integral part of family life. But the best leisure cycling is rarely done within a town or city; most riders prefer to seek quiet roads or picturesque off-road routes — which means carrying their bikes by car to their destinations. Unless you have a large estate, or pull the bike apart every time you go out, some form of carrying rack is essential. Buying a rack for the first time can be a perplexing experience as there are several types and a vast range of models, but every car owner, whether of a Porsche or Citroën 2CV, will find there's one to suit their needs.

### ROOF RACKS

THE traditional solution, with cycle fittings. They increase fuel consumption by between 15 and 25 per cent, but it is easy to carry three, sometimes four, bikes and there are no hassles with obscured numberplates or lights.

There are three types: those to carry the bikes upside down, clamping handlebars and saddles (not recommended because it stresses them in a way they are not designed for and the bikes are less stable); bicycles right way up with front wheel removed; and right way up with a wheel trough and support arm. Right way up with front wheel removed is the choice of many pro bike teams, bikes are quick to load/unload. But for most, right way up with a wheel trough is best. Do not exceed the recommended maximum weight limit.

Leading manufacturers, such as Automaxi or Thule, make fittings to suit practically all cars. Locks are a worthwhile extra. And don't forget your extra height; many bikes are damaged by height-restricting barriers at car parks. My favourite system comprises Thule's best roof bars combined with the Thule Tour cycle carrier, which is exceptionally secure and kind to both car and bike. Elite San Remo (£17.95 each) fittings will fit most roof bars and are the only ones available for front wheel-out fitting.

### TOW BAR MOUNTED

WILL carry two, three or occasionally four bikes. Fuel consumption is barely affected, but a tow bar and electric are required, which adds £100 or more to the cost. There are two main types, fitting either directly to the tow ball or to a plate behind it. The tow ball-mounted type (Pendle does one for three bikes at £73) are quick and easy to fit and great for those who have a continental-style towbar with integral tow ball.

Most tow bar mounted racks use two support arms from which the bikes — which need padding to prevent damage — are hung. Attachment loops for fixing straps help

and can be used with a lock. Another type supports each bike by the wheels and with a central support tube. These are kind to the bikes but are heavier, more expensive and difficult to store. Pendle makes a great wheel support rack costing from £120. We recommend the Pendle (£78) and Witter (£56.99) plate-mounted tow bar racks.

### STRAP-MOUNTED

THE most popular type, but with many pitfalls. They attach to the boot or rear door with straps and carry the bikes on two arms. The bikes need padding to prevent damage. Because the bikes obscure the numberplate and lights, most will need a numberplate lighting board.

There are several designs that mount the bikes up high (Halfords, Bell Sport, Automaxi, Rhode Gear or Hollywood) to avoid this problem, but, as with roof racks, they increase fuel consumption. Cars with fibreglass rear boots or doors cannot use this type of rack and those with all glass rear doors need kits to secure the straps available from Rhode Gear and Automaxi. The best have six straps and easily adjusted arms with a good choice of positions. Get the straps tight, particularly the lower two, which should be tightened after the bikes are mounted. Strap hooks need to be generously sized and plastic coated. Rhode Gear, Graber, Pendle, Automaxi, Bell Sport and Hollywood are recommended.

### OTHER TYPES

FOR 4x4 owners most manufacturers make racks that attach to the rear-mounted spare wheel and have arms like the tow bar-mounted versions. For carrying bikes on a sports car boot lid, Automaxi offers a two-cycle carrier that fits its standard Maxi Back Load system which, with rack and cycle carrier, costs £240.

Suppliers include Automaxi, 01525 363131; Elite, 01664 44513; Graber, 0115 985 5706; Hollywood, 0181 805 3088; Rhode Gear, 0181 954 7788; Paddy Hopkirk, 01525 850800; Pendle, 01282 699533; Thule, 01275 342424; Witter, 01244 341166.



Traditional roof racks can even be fitted to glamour cars such as Porsche's Boxster. But they increase fuel consumption — and beware of low barriers at car park entrances

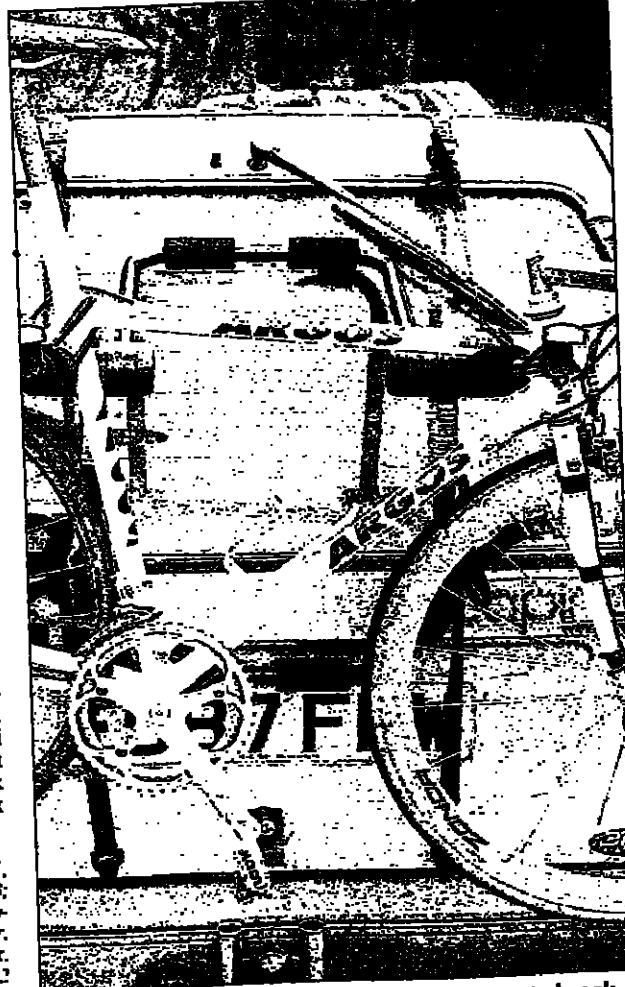
### BIKE RACKS AND THE LAW

ANY LOAD attached to your car must be properly secured. The maximum all-up weight of the car should not be exceeded.

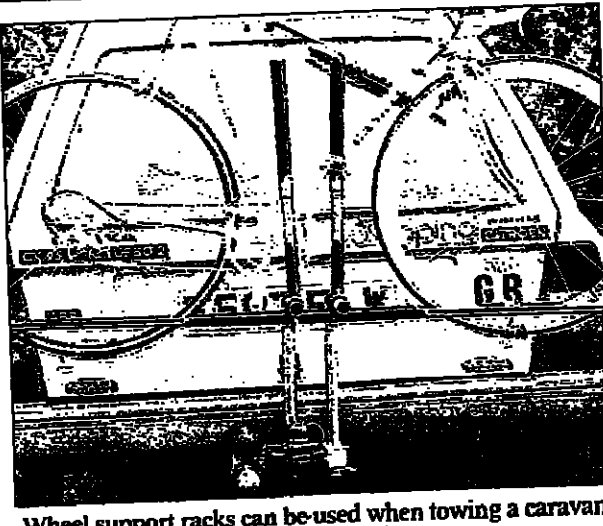
THE biggest problem arises from rear-mounted racks obscuring lights and numberplates: last summer, several police forces made a special point of cracking down on this. Lights must be clearly visible from all normal angles and the numberplate must not be obscured.

IT IS not good enough to simply hang a numberplate from the rack: it must be illuminated as well. With all but a few high mount rear racks, it is essential to use a proper lighting board.

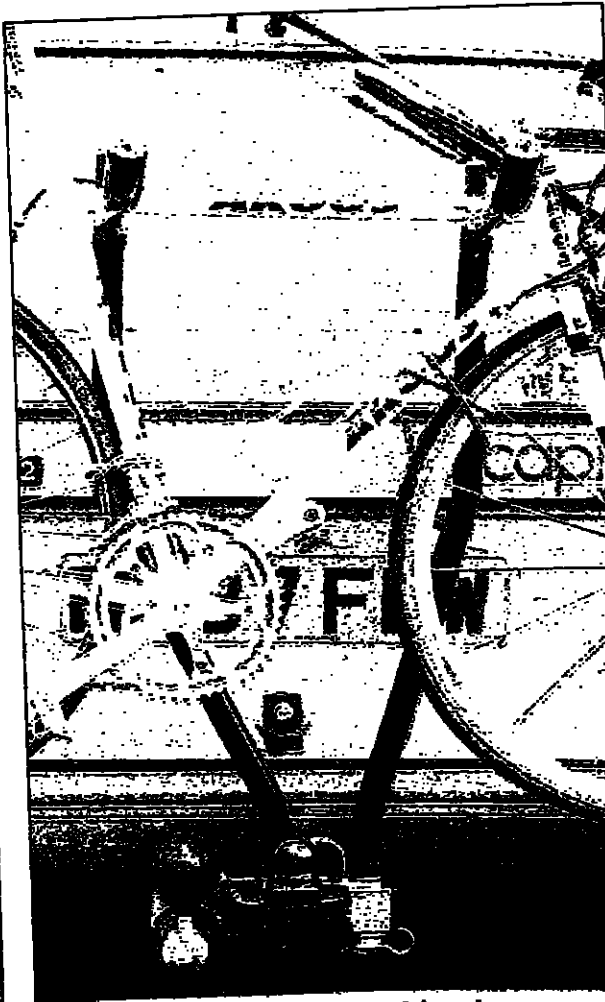
LIGHTING kits are available from Halfords and Automaxi; with modern cars, it's wise to get them professionally fitted.



Easy-to-use Rhode Gear Suttle strap-mounted rack



Wheel support racks can be used when towing a caravan



Tow bar-mounted racks are quick and easy to use







## CARMART: YOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S NEW, AND WHAT'S USED, ON THE FORECOURTS

## SPARE PARTS

WITH modern tyres giving motorists ever-increasing mileage, manufacturers need to offer something else to attract customers in a highly-competitive sector of the market. Avon Tyres have come up with the CR322, which promises more miles per gallon on a wide spectrum of mid-range cars.

Fuel savings of up to 5 per cent come from lower rolling resistance on the road, achieved by lightweight build and reduced deformation combined with improved tread construction; as well as offering improved wet grip, the tread has also been computer-analysed to identify patterns that produce less noise. Avon claims an environmental bonus by using advanced production techniques that have eliminated the use of traditional hydrocarbon solvents.

The tyres are available in more than 20 sizes.

THE busiest time in the used car market is fast approaching, and latest research shows that the average price paid for a privately bought secondhand car has gone from £3,900 to £4,200 in the past year.

The research was done by Equifax-HPI, the company that can check the status of any used car and will report, among other things, whether it has been stolen, has finance owing on it or has been written off.

Tony Worthy, managing director, says: "This is a big increase compared to inflation. We believe there are two reasons. First, there has been an increase in disposable income. Second, the 'newly new' bug has caught on fast as people realise they can get more for their money by buying used."

"But the increase rings warning bells. For example, we have nearly six million vehicles subject to outstanding finance on our database and in January one in eight cars checked were recorded there."

HPI hotline: 01722 422 422.

## To Scotland in a weatherproof castle

Robert Richardson shelters in Volvo's V90

## ROAD TEST

No cruising along some sun-soaked corniche for an hour or so on silken tarmac for this test, but 950 miles, starting and finishing in East London traffic with copious motorway, Edinburgh, the Lake District (including Shap) and assorted country roads in between.

And, for much of the time, Gothic weather: serious wind and rainfall that would have done wonders for shares in Noah and Sons (Arks R Us) plc. Throughout it all, the cabin of the V90 (until recently called the 960) estate was indifferent, solid as a castle on wheels, effortless and smooth.

Part of the car's legend is that it is not exciting; true, but we felt incredibly secure. The V90 is comfortable enough to drive for hours and emerge from the front seat without terminal stiffness and offers the advantages of size without its drawbacks. With rear-wheel drive, the turning lock is amazing, the car seeming almost to glide sideways.

I was changing gear on the rev counter rather than the speedometer. You can move up quickly, going into fifth at around 50mph, when the engine still feels comfortable at between 2,000 and 3,000rpm, reducing fuel consumption. Volvo has official figures of course, but my experience on a wide variety of road and traffic conditions over a week worked out at about 10 miles for £1 (an unusual measurement system, perhaps, but you get the point).

The target market for the V90 is my



Volvo V90: never mind the excitement, feel the sense of security

generation — put a man on the Moon, can't program the video — apparently so we can take the grandchildren out. The leading area is ample for assorted bikes and there is a cage guard that folds down from the roof for the dogs or recalcitrant infant, the built-in child's seat in the back allows junior to sit high enough up to see and not get bored.

On the down side, pedals were a little close together, leading me to operate accelerator and brake simultaneously occasionally, and a warning signal should you get out having left the lights on would be useful, but this is carping. The V90 is rugged, with enough refinement for motorizing that, if not sophisticated, is perfectly civilised. If you want to give the grandchildren some excitement, take them to the movies; if you want them to be safe, ride to the cinema in this car.

The word "barge", which is so often perjoratively attached to the term "executive", is no longer applicable to this car, writes Alan Capps. Perhaps the most surprising thing about the V90 is its handling.

Volvo has invested vast sums in recent years adding a sporty edge to its "safety-conscious load-lugging" image in an attempt to attract younger buyers. But somehow the top-of-the-range, leather and wood-finished estate is the last place you'd expect that switch to be apparent. That the car handles and rides as well as it does shows how thorough Volvo has been in applying the lessons learnt in touring car racing to this executive flagship.

Stiffer anti-roll bars at the front and a redesigned multi-link axle at the rear, together with improved

## VOLVO V90 GLE

Engine: Six-cylinder, 24-valve 2.5-litre giving 170bhp at 5,700rpm or 3-litre giving 204bhp at 6,000rpm.

Transmission: Five-speed manual or four-speed automatic.

Performance: 0-62mph in 9.7 seconds (9.1 for 3-litre). Max speed 130mph.

Economy: Urban 18.2mpg, extra urban 34.4mpg, combined 25.9mpg. (Executive 3-litre model 16.6mpg, 32.5mpg and 23.9mpg).

Equipment: Power steering, anti-lock brakes, side airbags. Price: £22,450-£31,500.

power steering give the driver much greater "feel" for the road.

I'd never understood why the big Volvo estate was such a popular vehicle for the suburban school run before. It may look a bit unwieldy, but in town the steering is a pleasant surprise. With just 3.5 turns lock-to-lock, it has a turning circle of 9.7 metres and the car manoeuvres as neatly as many smaller hatchbacks. This agility, together with the attention paid to safety, suggests that Volvo's corner of the school-run market will not suffer from its change of image. In fact the 900-series commands one of the highest rates of owner loyalty of any large car.

There is only one major problem, for such a large car, the space around the pedals seems extraordinarily small, surely something which Volvo's engineers could solve?

## FORECOURT

passengers, costs a substantial amount less and keeps its value.

Best buy is the 1.8-litre GLX petrol and any of the diesels. Expect to pay £12,995 for a 1995 M-reg 2.0 litre GLX TD with average mileage.

The Space Wagon has been around since 1984 and is a genuine people-carrier that has lived for too long in the shadow of the Renault Espace. High mileage cars and tatty

models from the mid-Eighties should be avoided. Watch out for blue exhaust smoke, oil leaks from the engine and noisy pumps.

THE Audi 100 Avant (1991-1995) is spacious, economical to run and features a long-lasting galvanised body. Unfortunately, because of Audi's increasing image as one of the more affluent cars on the road, it is also expensive to buy, not very rapid and quite rare.

Because of its image and impres-

sive load-carrying capacity, this is a car much favoured in estate form by the ski set. But it is just as practical for carrying large numbers of children around and has a good reputation for safety. The only drawback is that it can be a bit thirsty if restricted to town driving.

Low mileage recent models in good condition do best. Best buy is the 1993 2.0 E automatic, which sells for around £13,500. Cars to avoid are any with above average mileage and the 2-litre automatic.

## USED CAR BRIEF



**VOLVO V90 GLE**  
Vaughan spent £30,000 revamping his tried and trusted Cavalier then dumped the old name in favour of its Euro-Sig Volvo. Introduced two years ago, the car received only a lukewarm reception initially, despite its fancy mirrors. Critics said it was not different enough, although it is effectively a brand new car. Engines include 1.7 and 2-litre diesels, plus 1.6, 1.8 and 2-litre petrols, and 2.5-litre V6. Vectra is available as a four-door saloon, five-door hatch, and estate.

**GOOD NEWS:** The Vectra is backed by a huge dealership network, there are plenty around and in its two years on the road the car has won over many early critics, and is now a firm favourite with the toughest critics of all, the high mileage company car driver's. Roomier than the Cavalier, well equipped and well built, and quieter too than the Cavalier.

**LOOK FOR:** Vectra fitted with the more modern ECOTEC engines are the ones to go for rather than the 1.6 eight-valve that came from the Astra. Best option is probably the 2-litre 134bhp ECOTEC, although the optimum power there is a 2.5-litre V6 giving 168bhp.

**SAFETY:** With the Vectra, the Cavalier's safety levels, rated as average by the Department of Transport, moved on with the addition of anti-lock brakes as standard across the range, while the range-topping CDX gets dual airbags.

**REPLACEMENT PARTS:** (includes VAT) Full exhaust £250; catalytic converter £225; front brake pads (pair) £25; alternator (exchange) £250; headlamp £120.

**OVERALL:** The Vectra benefits from drawing on its bigger brothers, such as the Omega. Despite early misgivings, the Vectra clearly offers more equipment, more room, better safety and some improved engines compared to the Cavalier. Not a wildly exciting car, but one that is supremely able and it has got those mirrors.

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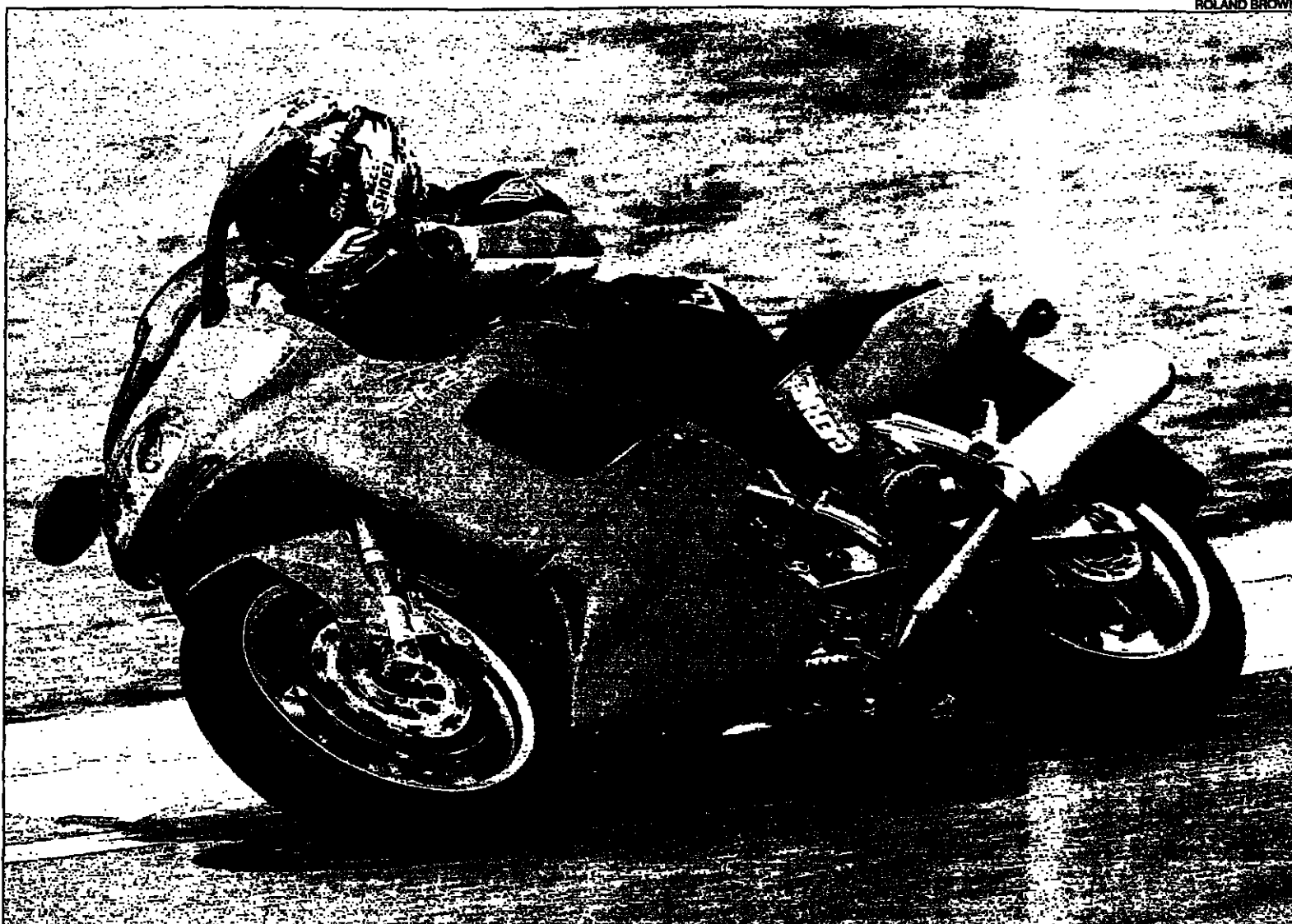
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# A sensible way to start a new era



Ducati ST2: designed as much for practicality as style, it cannot match the beauty of the more streamlined 916, but it's fast and fine-handling

**I**t's appropriate that Ducati's first new model since the firm was taken over last year should not be a super-sports machine, all sleek styling and outrageous performance, but the ST2, a more rounded and sensible sportster. Pure sportsters, such as Ducati's gorgeous 916, succeed by appealing only to the heart; sport-touring riders would have been tempted by a Ducati in recent years as the Bologna firm struggled through a cash crisis that resulted in lost production, long delays for customers and reliability problems. But now the overdue invoices have been paid off by Texas Pacific, the American investment group that bought a 51 per cent stake in Ducati last September. Texas Pacific insists that a new Ducati era has begun; the ST provides the perfect opportunity to prove it.

The ST2 has the Ducati trademarks of a big V-twin engine and tubular steel "ladder" frame. But its bodywork, designed as much for practicality as style, cannot match the beauty of the more streamlined 916. The new bike's engine is based on the single overhead camshaft, two-valves-per-cylinder unit from the 900SS (hence the ST2 name: an eight-valve ST4 is due next year). The motor is enlarged to 944cc, cooled by water instead of air and oil, and fed by a fuel-injection system in place of carburetors.

Chassis design and geometry could easily come from one of Ducati's traditional sports models, but the ST2 differs by

incorporating touring features such as a fairly tall windscreen, large fuel tank, centrestand and even the option of colour-matched luggage panniers. When you fire up the engine, there's a familiar V-twin rumble, but the riding position is fairly roomy and relaxed, with a gentle lean forward to the slightly raised handlebars.

The ST2 was more at home on the roads of southern Spain than on the Jerez racetrack at

which the launch was based. Its engine produces a respectable peak output of 83bhp at 8,500rpm, but is most impressive at lower revs. From below 50mph in top gear, the soft-tuned V-twin's mid-range torque combines with crisp fuel-injection response to send the bike storming forward at a touch of the throttle.

That makes for swift overtaking on the road and, along with a slick six-speed gearbox, allows effortless high-speed

riding. The Ducati is smooth until about 6,000rpm, or 100mph in top gear, when its handlebars begin to tingle.

**A**lthough the ST2's top speed is a respectable 140mph, its softly-tuned engine runs out of breath at about 3,000rpm and doesn't encourage hard riding in the way a sportier machine would.

Much the same is true of the chassis, which is more than

adequate for rapid road riding but has too much suspension movement to match the precision of the finest sportsters. That made the ST2 competent rather than inspired on the track; on the road, the balance of comfort and control provided by the Japanese-made Showa front forks and rear shocks is just about right. And the sports-tourer's new generation Brembo front brake calipers give more stopping power even than the 916.

Other features are mostly good, too, although the lipped screen generates enough wind turbulence to give a noisy ride if you are tall. The fuel tank holds a generous 21 litres, the neat instrument panel includes a fuel gauge and a clock, the seat is broad and well-padded and the mirrors have split-image lenses (a first for bikes) providing wider rear vision. A passenger is well catered for as well, with plenty of

**Engine:** 90-degree V-twin, four-valve, 944cc produces 83bph at 5,500rpm.  
**Transmission:** Six-speed gearbox. Chain final drive.  
**Performance:** 0-60mph in 3.5 seconds, maximum speed 140mph.  
**Price:** £8,900 (plus £350 on-the-road charge); £9,500 with panniers from September.  
**Insurance group:** 14 (with Norwich Union).

room plus a sturdy grab-rail, although the Ducati lacks the tailpiece luggage hooks that are a useful feature even of many smaller bikes.

Talk of luggage provides one reminder of the old Ducati; the integrated panniers will not be available until September, although deliveries of the bike, which costs £8,900, begin at the end of this month.

This will not help the firm's new management to persuade sports-touring riders — a far more pragmatic bunch than Ducati's hedonistic sports bike customers — that the ST2 can match the efficiency and build quality of rivals such as Honda's ever-popular VFR750F.

On the evidence so far, though, Texas Pacific is very serious about quality, to the extent of committing more than £40 million to improving production facilities in the next three years.

Maybe the ST2 is the kind of bike to respect rather than, like the 916, to fall madly in love with — but it's a fast, fine-handling and reasonably practical machine with plenty of Ducati's traditional V-twin character. If it approaches Japanese levels of reliability — and that's a big if — the ST2 deserves to be a hit.

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Alan Copps discovers where he can fill up — at only 39p a litre — with what could be the fuel of the future

## 'A car that runs on gas sounds scary to a lot of people'

Driving round the broken streets of a north London industrial estate trying to find the gas depot where I could refill the tank on my Honda Accord, I began to wonder whether liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) could really be a fuel of the future. Then I found the place, filled the tank and looked at the bill: 39p a litre. I began to think again.

With the unleaded petrol I usually buy costing close to 60p a litre, even the warning that LPG might be about 20 per cent heavier on fuel consumption paled into insignificance. If the fuel was 33 per cent cheaper, what would it matter?

Filling up proved no more difficult than filling up with petrol, although with variations. The Accord, like most LPG vehicles at present, is a dual-fuel car with separate fillers for gas and petrol. The gas one obviously has to be sealed, so it required the services of Brian Sisson, manager of Calor's London Centre, to show me how it was done, but then I've often hankered after the days of personal service on the forecourt. A twist connected the nozzle to the filler valve, a press on the button started the meter and a squeeze on the trigger just like any other filler was all it took. It is a routine that Calor

believes will become familiar to many more British motorists in the near future. The first of a network of filling stations supplying LPG has just opened in South-east London. It comes in a form called Calor Autoblend and is being marketed under a joint agreement with Jet. The two companies are confident that once that 39p figure starts appearing on the forecourt billboards interest will gather and my backstreet experience will become a thing of the past.

In the search for an alternative to petrol and diesel, LPG must now be in pole position, thanks largely to the boost it got in last year's Budget, when duty was reduced by 25 per cent to 10.78p a litre, while that on petrol and diesel was increased again. But until now that reduction seemed to have achieved little in terms of profile, simply because there has been no network of roadside outlets for the fuel. There are an estimated 1,500 vehicles, mostly commercial, running around Britain on LPG. The figure is growing, but is still pathetically few compared to the million-plus in Italy and the 450,000 in Holland.

The great advantage of LPG is cleanliness. It eliminates visible smoke and soot and its exhaust emissions are claimed to be 70 per cent lower than



As an alternative to petrol and diesel, LPG must be in pole position after the boost it got in last year's Budget, when duty was reduced by 25 per cent

either petrol or diesel. Most importantly, it produces no particulates, the harmful sooty specks blamed for the increasing incidence of asthma and other lung diseases that have gone such a long way recently towards destroying any claims for diesel as an environmentally friendly fuel.

It's not, of course, as clean as electricity, which produces no such emissions. But even the most advanced electric vehicles, on sale in America and undergoing tests in Coventry and elsewhere, suffer from the old problems of short range and heavy and costly batteries.

The idea of a car that runs on gas sounds a bit scary to a lot of people, but LPG has now been around for more than 60 years. Modern pressurised tanks, which have been subjected to exhaustive tests, are equipped with cut-off valves



Double fillers on an LPG-converted car and the gas tank in the boot with cut-off valves that work automatically in accidents

that work automatically in the event of accidents.

So what is it like to drive a car fuelled by LPG? I borrowed the Accord for a week of commuting between home and office in London and house-viewing in Kent, follow-

ing routes I have covered in vehicles of almost every description from the desperately decrepit to the enviably extravagant. The answer is that once the car is going there is no difference at all.

The only peculiarity is the starting procedure. There is a switch mounted on the centre console by which the driver can select gas or petrol. But, because the pure gas is initially slow to mix with air, the conversion is set up so that

even when the switch is in the gas position, the engine starts on petrol.

Let it run a few seconds, blip the throttle and it switches to gas. If you forget the blip, the gas simply cuts in the first time the engine exceeds 2,000rpm.

There is a third position in which it is possible — if you've run out of petrol, say — to start the car on gas alone, although because of the vagaries of the

initial mixture this might provoke a backfire or brief misfire. If you run out of one fuel on the move, the switch to the other is automatic and happens without a hiccup, as I discovered to my relief in the middle of Euston Road.

My one criticism of the conversion in the Accord was the gas gauge; a series of lights beneath this switch was impossible to read on the move and still required a great deal of squinting and shading even

## LPG The cost and the benefits

● TO CONVERT a petrol engine to dual-fuel use with LPG costs about £1,100. The conversion utilises existing engine-management electronics and is easily removed when the car is sold on.

● THERE are about 100 LPG filling points in Britain at present. Calor estimates that on a fleet vehicle covering 20,000 miles a year conversion costs can be recouped in four years.

● USING LPG also extends the life of oil, spark plugs and catalytic converters.

● TANKS take up surprisingly little room. They are pressurised and can survive impacts better than petrol or diesel tanks.



Dual-system switch and fuel gauge

at a standstill. Then Sisson showed me the much neater conversion on his own Vauxhall Vectra. When the switch was flicked, the standard fuel gauge simply read for gas instead of petrol.

Calor and Jet's long-term aim, of course, is to encourage the introduction of specific LPG engines by major manufacturers. But the dual-fuel conversion has one advantage: the cars have virtually twice the range of a standard model.

## A TIMES NEWSPAPERS COMPETITION

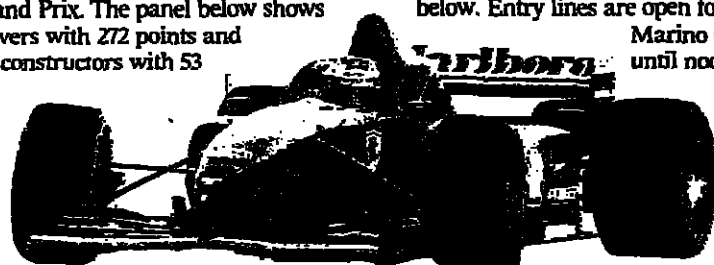
# Play Fantasy Formula One



Prizes worth £40,000



On the eve of tomorrow's race, the Argentine Grand Prix in Buenos Aires, we reprint the Fantasy Formula One scores for each of the selections after the Brazilian Grand Prix. The panel below shows Berger leading the drivers with 272 points and McLaren heading the constructors with 53 points. Full results of tomorrow's race will appear in Sport next Friday. To register to play our £40,000 Fantasy Formula One game, in association



### THE PRIZES

**JACKPOT:** The manager with the best team score on our Fantasy Formula One leaderboard after the final race of the season, the Portuguese Grand Prix at Estoril, on October 26, will win £25,000. Prizes of £10,000 and £5,000 will go to two runners-up.

**INDIVIDUAL RACE WINNERS:** The manager of the team which scores the most points in tomorrow's Argentine GP will win a VIP trip to the British GP. The runner-up will get a Sony PlayStation and Formula One game worth £250.

**TO ENTER BY TELEPHONE** Call our entry hotline on 0891 405 001 (+44 990 100 311 outside the UK). Calls last approximately seven minutes and must be made using a Touch-tone telephone. You will be asked to nominate your 12 two-digit selections in turn. The order in which you register your first three drivers will be your predictions for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd finishing places for the grands prix where bonus points apply.

You will then be asked to give your Fantasy Formula One team name, your own name, address, postcode and daytime telephone number. You will receive a 10-digit PIN number as confirmation of your entry.

**TRANSFERS** If you've already entered a team you can change up to four selections before the San Marino GP by calling 0891 555 994 (+44 990 100 394 ex UK) before noon on Thursday April 24. Your new team must comprise three selections from each of groups A, B, C and D. The first three selections you make will be deemed to be your prediction for the Monaco GP bonus points.

**CHECK YOUR SCORE** Check the scores and positions of your team(s) by calling 0891 884 648 (0044 990 100 348 ex UK) and tap in your 10-digit PIN number. The line currently carries all positions after the Brazilian GP and will be updated on Wednesday April 16 after the Argentine GP.

with the Marlboro World Championship Team, just choose a team of six racing drivers and six constructors, three from each of the four groups listed in the panel below. Entry lines are open for registration for the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola

until noon, Thursday April 24.

You can check the position of your team(s) by using our checklist.

● You can also play Fantasy Formula One with The Sunday Times

### MAKE 3 SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THESE FOUR GROUPS

01 D Hill	93	90	07 M Hakkinen	125	253
02 M Schumacher	126	261	08 D Coulthard	116	266
03 J Villeneuve	172	192	09 R Barrichello	22	77
04 E Irvine	101	113	10 H-H Frentzen	116	222
05 J Alesi	121	164	11 J Herbert	131	141
06 G Berger	149	272	12 M Salo	118	160

13 O Panis	140	257	19 G Fisichella	118	135
14 J Verstappen	107	99	20 S Nakano	106	227
15 U Katayama	92	126	21 N Larini	126	247
16 P Diniz	16	130	22 J Trulli	118	232
17 R Rosset	0	0	23 J Magnussen	7	41
18 R Schumacher	59	65	24 V Sospiri	0	0

25 Williams	30	29	31 Arrows	-10	-3
26 Ferrari	22	37	32 Sauber	20	31
27 McLaren	23	53	33 Tyrrell	14	-6
28 Benetton	25	38	34 Minardi	16	23
29 Jordan	9	-11	35 Stewart	-10	-30
30 Prost	24	46	36 Lola	0	0

The first column of figures in light type after the names show the Fantasy Formula One Brazilian GP race scores, the second column the total competition points so far

## Rover's centre of tomorrow

Ian Morton visits the plant that will design the millennium Mini

The Mini for the millennium — the car that will take the legend of the Sixties into another century — will be born in Rover's new design and engineering centre in Warwickshire.

The £30 million centre has already produced the "Spirital" Mini concept cars that captured the limelight at the Geneva motor show. Its creation, which has entirely taken place since BMW acquired Rover, appears to offer further confirmation that Munich intends Rover to remain a separate and largely self-propelled partner within BMW.

Sited on Rover's existing 900-acre test complex and proving ground at Gaydon, the centre was mooted in 1992 when it was decided to centralise the company's historically dispersed design, engineering and development studios. When BMW took over Rover in 1994, detailed planning had only just begun.

"As a strongly engineering-led company, BMW fully supported Rover's ambitions to create a world-class product design and development centre in Britain," says Nick Stephenson, Rover Group design and engineering director. "Rover's new facility plan fitted well with BMW's existing R&D resources."

Work started in March 1995. 14 months after BMW's takeover. Now more than 1,000 staff are designing Rovers for the millennium. A number are from BMW, but for that matter several Rover personnel are now based in Munich. "There is duplication," admits Geoff Upex, design and concept director. "We have here much of the same equipment that BMW has — strategically it would be silly for us to have different kit to BMW. We use the same automatic motorised measuring systems



Sound barrier: a Range Rover is noise-tested in the semi-anechoic chamber at Gaydon

and are building our clay models to 40 per cent full size in line with BMW practice because that scale fits BMW's wind tunnel."

Projects begun and developed at Gaydon will need Munich approval, says Upex, but on the same basis that Rover's previous owner, British Aerospace, was expected to "take an intense interest at critical stages".

No working balance has been established and there is no assumed formula for this, Upex adds. Some early work is being shared by Gaydon, Munich, independent design houses and BMW's technical centre in the US.

"We have a relationship where on some projects we may co-operate, and on others we may compete. It's about best use of a total resource."

Vastly airy, with daylight flooding in through huge windows, the centre includes a large showroom where top-level discussions take place around the concept models on which decisions must be taken, a process modelled on BMW practice.

Outside is a "viewing garden" where Rovers and rival products can be looked at in daylight from up to 100 yards, so that executives never lose contact with how the public sees vehicles.

The main building groups around a central thoroughfare — known as The Street — a number of specialist areas such as clay model-making,

woodmill, trim development, fibreglass styling and a workshop where competitors' cars are stripped to reveal their secrets.

Among the specialist research areas on the site established in the quest for more reliable and refined Rovers are two which have innovative facilities unmatched in the automotive industry.

To tackle increasingly tough regulations to control the noise emitted by passing vehicles — and to overcome the exigencies of British weather — Rover has brought the test indoors into a large semi-anechoic chamber (sound is absorbed by the walls to reduce echoes virtually to nil) in which a stationary vehicle is revved on

rollers and a computer runs the sound through a fixed avenue of microphones to reproduce exactly the effect of a moving vehicle passing a single microphone.

And in the Crest facility (combined road and environment simulation test), a vehicle on a suspension-pummelling test rig may at the same time be subjected to the equivalent of intense sunlight from 27 high-frequency lamps each delivering 4 kilowatts — "the same as standing unprotected in the middle of the Sahara at midday," according to the technician in charge — while the temperature may be varied between -40C and +80C and the humidity can be adjusted from 5 to 95 per cent.



"Where can I sell something fast?"

See p. 8

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A high-contrast, black and white advertisement for the Volvo V40. The car is shown from a side profile, parked on a wire mesh surface. A large, dark, abstract shape, resembling a stylized flower or a large leaf, is positioned behind the car, partially obscuring it. The background is a light, textured surface. The car's body has "VOLVO" and "V40" written on it.

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